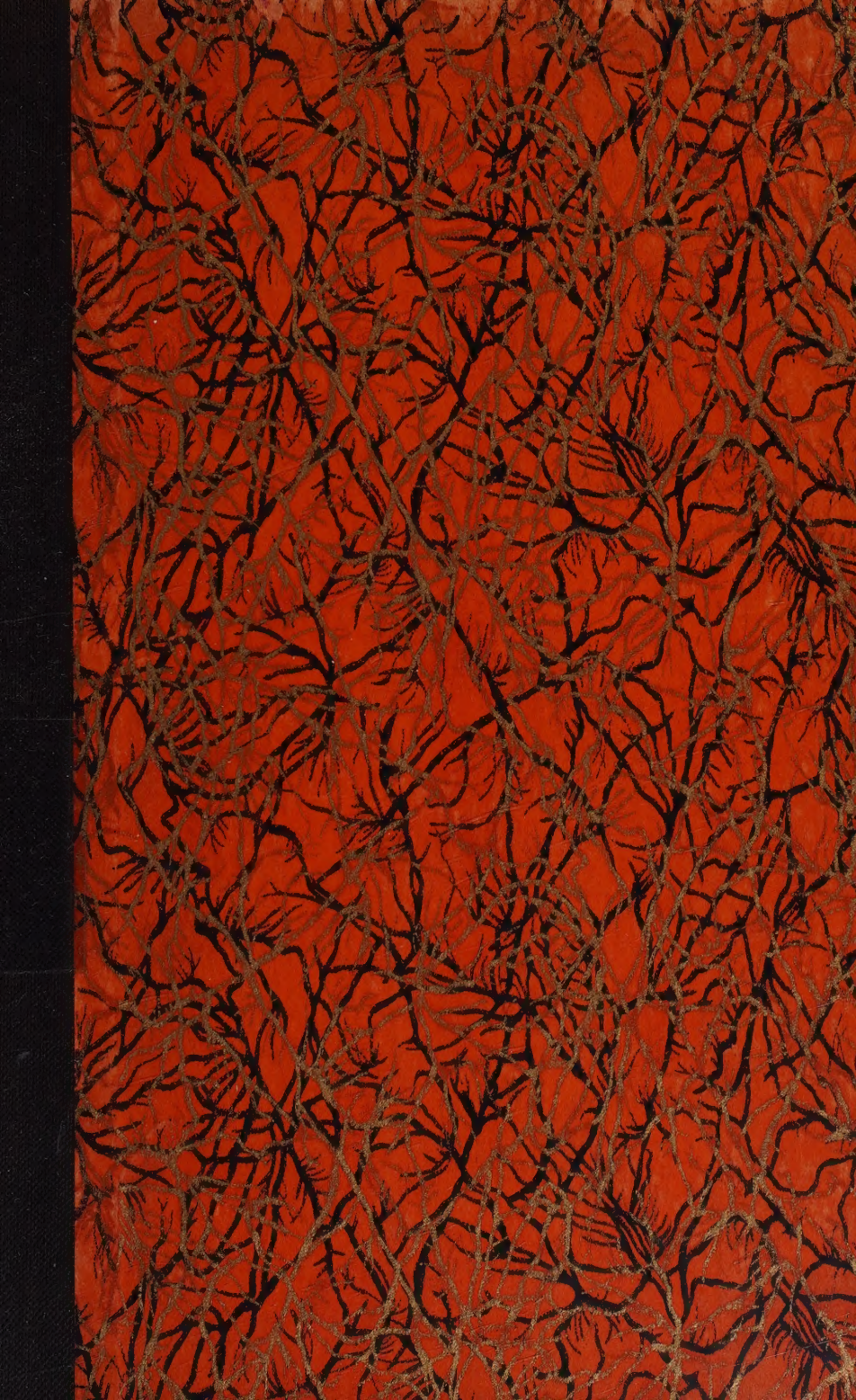








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THE WOLF CUB



Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon



THE WOLF CUB

*The Great Adventure of
Count Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon
in California and Sonora
1850-1854*

Raousset-
Boulbon

Translated from the French of
MAURICE SOULIÉ
By FARRELL SYMONS

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The Wolf Cub was written by a Frenchman for Frenchmen, but its interest is probably greater for Americans than for the public for whom it originally was intended.

In the history of the filibuster raids that occupy a varicolored page in the annals of America for the decade 1850 to 1860 Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon stands out as a figure of considerable interest. This is due not so much perhaps to his actual achievements, which were for the most part sterile, as to his unusual character, his gallant spirit and his tragic end. Gaston's greatest misfortune was that he was born several centuries too late. In every trait, in every gesture he was the medieval adventurer, dreaming the age-old dream of noble deeds in wondrous far-off lands, fearing nothing but dishonor.

On one occasion Gaston regretted that he was not an American. "If I were an Ameri-

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

can," he said, "everything would go like a song." Capital would have been found for his bold ventures in Sonora, where he had hoped to establish a colony for France, and a greater chance of success would have been his. Frequently during his enterprises he complained bitterly of lack of aid from the French Government, and contrasted it with American good feeling. But whatever may have been the attitude of private individuals in this country toward him there is no doubt that for the United States authorities he was a thorn in the flesh. Early in 1854 we find Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, writing to the military commander of California, Major-General Wool, recommending him to maintain, "our international obligations, by preventing unlawful expeditions against the territories of foreign powers. Confidence is felt that you will, to the utmost of your ability, use all proper means to detect the fitting out of armed expeditions against countries with which the United States are at peace, and will zealously co-operate with the civil authorities in maintaining the neutrality laws."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

From the correspondence reproduced in the Executive Documents of the House of Representatives (38th Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. no. 88) it is apparent that Gaston took up a good deal of the worthy General's time. In a report to New York, Wool styles him the "notorious Count Raousset de Boulbon," and intimates that he was arranging for the Count's arrest.

On May 15, 1854, Wool reports to Jefferson Davis that he had given instructions for the arrest of Dillon, the French Consul at San Francisco, "for violating the neutrality laws of the country" in connection with Gaston's second expedition to Sonora, then in preparation, a step of which Davis, despite his earlier instructions to Wool regarding filibuster schemes, seemed to disapprove.

The entire story of the negotiations between the United States authorities and the French and Mexican Consuls in regard to Gaston's expedition furnishes an interesting study in the minor diplomatic history of the period, and may be followed in the Executive Documents already referred to.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

It was not American intervention, however, that proved fatal to the gallant Frenchman's desperate undertaking. The apathy of the Mexican people under the tyranny of an effete government, incomprehensible errors of command and—it would seem—certain minor but fatal flaws in Gaston's own composition turned his ambitious enterprises into tragedies instead of victories. How near Gaston came to attaining success is a subject for speculation; whether his life, as Monsieur Soulié declares, makes one of the "most splendid romances" the reader may decide.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FRENCH EDITION

IN AN epoch such as ours, troubled by a multitude of petty anxieties, it seems especially interesting to call up the image of some of the extraordinary men of the past.

Among the men of superior stamp the Comte Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon occupies an eminent place. In him were united and exalted all the great qualities and the great defects that characterize the French people. Enterprising, far-sighted, heroic and a great lover, but too confident and too easily discouraged, he was essentially French, and therefore commands the admiration and affection of his countrymen.

The epic of his adventures belongs to the middle of the last century, from 1850 to 1854, and its background is the United States and Mexico. Finding the strait-laced civilization of the Old World too oppressive, he was first attracted by California, then in its infancy

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

and gripped by the fever that followed the discovery of gold. But the United States soon made this new country like all other civilized states in America or elsewhere. From that moment Gaston began to find himself cramped and stifled.

Mexico, and especially the state of Sonora, then deluged with blood by the Apache Indians, haunted his imagination. Guided by a sort of political genius, he glimpsed the possibility of establishing there a magnificent French colony by forestalling the outstretched hand of the United States. On his own initiative, without the support of any government and in face of the opposition of the Mexican authorities, he organized a small expedition which antedated by ten years the ill-starred army Napoleon III was destined to send to Mexico in 1864.

Gaston's failure was due to practically the same causes as that of Napoleon's expedition, and he paid for it with his life.

But he lived the most splendid romance of real life that can be imagined, a romance of adventure, war and love, yet one that is

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

rigorously historic. For that matter, does History differ greatly from Romance?

The documents used in the writing of this book have been drawn from both French and American sources. The narratives of Monsieur Vigneaux (*Souvenirs d'un prisonnnier de guerre au Mexique*), Monsieur O. de La Chappelle (*Le Comte de Raousset-Boulbon et l'expédition de la Sonore*), and Monsieur de Saint-Amant (*Voyage en Californie en 1852*) have been especially consulted. The principal American works laid under contribution are the *History of California* by Royce and the *History of Arizona* by Ferish. Finally, the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Paris and several private collections, very courteously made available by their owners, have furnished a new and invaluable documentation.

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THE WOLF CUB

THE WOLF CUB

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE WOLF CUB

GASTON DE RAOUSSET-BOULBON was born in Avignon, on May 5, 1817, in the house of his maternal grandmother, the Marquise de Sariac. His mother died a few days after his birth, and immediately afterward his father returned to the family château near Tarascon, leaving Gaston in his grandmother's care.

The Comte de Raousset-Boulbon was one of the least sociable of men. Stern, taciturn, autocratic, he resembled in many respects the portrait Chateaubriand drew of his father in the *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*.

A refugee in 1793, he passed some anxious

moments in Germany, often not knowing on waking up in the morning how he would live until night. He obstinately refused, however, to return to France during the reign of the Corsican usurper, whom he ironically called "Mr. Buonaparte." The entry of the Allies into Paris in 1815 brought him a little solace and the year following he decided to restore the old Boulbon manor. There he lived like an owl in the only tower that was still inhabitable, discontented with everything and everybody, especially Louis XVIII, whom he found too lenient toward the former revolutionists, and was hardly reassured by the White Terror that raged in Provence.

Tiring of passing his days in complete inaction, he tried to spend his time quarreling with his neighbors and the local administration. The story of the disputes he had with the tax collector has become legendary in the district. His assessment had been increased by one hundred and twenty francs over the preceding year's figure, and he wanted the collector to come to the château to explain, refusing to pay until he did. Unfortunately for him, he had

fallen on a fellow as obstinate as himself. Not being obliged to give an explanation, the collector categorically refused and informed him that if he had not paid his taxes by the date fixed, his crops and, if necessary, his furniture would be seized.

In due course the collector presented himself and Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon had him drubbed by his gardener, for which act he was condemned to a thousand-franc fine by the court at Aix. But the affair did not end here. The Count drew up and had printed a statement of several pages addressed to the members of the Chamber of Deputies, demanding justice and the dismissal of the collector. Naturally nothing resulted. This step cost him several thousand francs and failed to restore him to better humor.

He had married a second cousin, Constance de Sariae, of one of the first families of the Béarn. There was no reason why the marriage should be happy—and it was not. The conjugal life of Madame de Raousset-Boulbon with this bitter, proud and hard man was a long martyrdom. Sweet-tempered, senti-

mental, even romantic, she passed moments of unhappiness that sometimes reached despair. Her husband considered her practically as an article of furniture, never speaking to her without calling her "Madame," and then only for the needs of daily life. Worn out by grief, she died at her mother's home at Avignon soon after giving birth to a son who was baptized the next day at the church of St. Agricoll with the name of Gabriel-Marie-Gaston.

From his earliest moments Gaston showed that he had his father's character.

He was the *enfant terrible* in the full sense of the phrase. Irascible, autocratic and impatient of all restraint, he had, however, happily inherited his mother's good heart and romantic imagination, which made him lovable and interesting despite his fits of rage. At seven years of age he beat his tutor and claimed the right to rule the household. The servants called him "the wolf cub." One day one of them failed to obey an order the boy had given him, and Gaston told him he was dismissed. The servant naturally took no

notice whatever and appeared at the dinner hour, as usual, to serve at table. Gaston, wild with anger, got up, took him by the arm, shook him roughly, and asked his grandmother how it was that the man was still in the house.

"Because I consider myself mistress here," replied Madame de Sariae.

"Then, if that's the case, choose between him and me. If he does not leave here, I'll go myself."

And he went and shut himself in his room. Madame de Sariae attached no importance to her grandson's threat, and kept the servant. Next morning Gaston's tutor, in great alarm, came to tell her that the child had disappeared. He was not found until evening, when he was discovered three leagues from Avignon, on the road to Toulouse, wandering aimlessly.

After several years of forbearance, Madame de Sariae found herself at the end of her resources, and wrote to her son-in-law that she refused to be responsible any longer for the "wolf cub."

Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon did not

worry himself greatly about finding a solution to that difficulty. During his refugee days he had known the Superior of the College of Jesuits at Freiburg, in the Palatinate. It was a school renowned for its discipline, and the noble families of Germany and France sent their troublesome children there. The Count wrote to the Superior asking if he would be good enough to take charge of his son. Three weeks after he received an affirmative reply, had his horses harnessed and two days later arrived at Avignon in a determined mood.

Gaston had not expected him. Warned of his father's arrival, and uneasy, as he had reason to be, as to his reception, he once again fled from the house. But this time his flight lasted three days and the gendarmes brought him back half dead with hunger. He had been from farm to farm asking for bread, sleeping in the wheat shocks, and stealing fruit. The punishment he received on his return can be imagined.

The following day his father started out with him for Freiburg. It was a terrible journey. During eight days Monsieur de

Raousset-Boulbon spoke not a word to his son—which was just as well, as Gaston would not have replied. The boy lived in a state of suppressed fury, from which the scenery and the incidents of the journey failed to distract him. He arrived at the college of Freiburg, fists clenched, feverish-eyed, for all the world like a little hunted wolf.

After having presented him to the Superior, his father went away without even bidding the boy good-by.

One wonders what would have happened to Gaston had not the Jesuits been such understanding teachers.

After several days of observation, these scientists of the soul decided that this young wolf had the makings of a hero. They took care not to irritate him, and by the influence of reason, emulation and, above all, insistence upon the point of honor, won from him what they could never have obtained by compulsion. Two years later, the “wolf cub” was the eagle of the college.

There he spent nine years. But nothing human is without its defects, and perhaps the

Jesuits, by their religious education, rendered him a doubtful service in developing too much his sentimental tendencies and his constant aspiration to something "higher."

A letter written by him when he was seventeen reveals the restlessness that was destined to prove his undoing.

"I am sad and gloomy, and my heart is heavy. Nothing consoles me but the dream of glory. If only you knew what hopes are nurtured in my soul! But I do not dare to confide them to you, for you would think me a visionary. I would like to find myself at grips with tremendous adversities, even tragic adversities, if glory were the prize. I would like to see the forces of the world break against my soul. I shall be a great man or a great criminal. Meanwhile, the life I lead here is deadly in its monotony; the routine, the apathy of it, kill me. I need something else—but what?"

The thoughtlessness of an instructor hastened the crisis. For a trifling offense a young priest who was not yet a *connaissieur*

of souls commanded Gaston to kneel in the middle of the classroom and ask his pardon. The "wolf cub," still unsubdued, immediately reappeared, baring his teeth and flashing from his eyes the wild fire that had so much alarmed Madame de Sariae. Then, without replying to the instructor, he strode out of the room and slammed the door. Like a whirlwind he swept into the study of the *Père Préfet*, the principal of the college, and, through clenched teeth, declared that he preferred death to such humiliation and that he would consent to kneel to God alone. The *Père Préfet* upheld the instructor and sent Gaston back to the classroom to await his decision. Instead of obeying, the young man left the college and for three days wandered in the Black Forest, living on the little money he had in his pocket. When his anger had cooled and hunger began to gnaw, he returned to the college, only to learn of his dismissal.

He had just reached his eighteenth year. This time his father did not trouble himself to come for him, but merely asked Madame de Sariae to turn over to Gaston the three

hundred thousand francs left him by his mother, adding that the young man might go wherever he liked so long as he never saw him again.

With a fortune of three hundred thousand francs a young man of eighteen does not stop in Avignon. Paris is too tempting, and Gaston dreamed of pleasures and glory there.

In the metropolis he led for ten years the life of a rich young idler. He was a fashionable lion. He astonished the bourgeois on the Boulevard des Capucines and the Champs-Élysées by the magnificence of his black horses harnessed in silver. At the Café de Paris his table was reserved close to those of the Marquis de Hallays, Prince Demidoff and Alfred de Musset. He kept a luxurious houseboat, then a novelty, on the Seine, and negro servants and roystering mistresses. He had, however, other ambitions besides amusing himself. He wrote two plays, *Bianca Cappello* and *Savonarola*, which were never performed, and a novel published by the newspaper *La Presse* under the title of *Con-*

fession, which lacks neither psychology nor eloquence. It is to some extent his own story—that of a man tormented by a vision which forever eludes him.

“What is the use of living without achieving greatness?” he repeated often in the spells of melancholy which threw a cloud upon him in the midst of his pleasures.

Soon he began to weary of Paris.

At that time Marshal Bugeaud had just conquered Algeria and begun to colonize it. Seeing an excellent opportunity to observe and do something new in a new country, Gaston spent the greater part of what remained of his fortune buying the property of Bernou in the Mitidja.

It was not long, however, before he found himself in difficulties with the tyrannical military administration. He had not the least aptitude for agriculture, still less for the cultivation of an agricultural domain. Big game hunting interested him infinitely more, and he became friendly with the Arab chiefs, entertained them lavishly and lived with them. Like the Marquis de Morès fifty years

later, Gaston was soon regarded by the military authorities as suspect, and despite the friendship of the Duc d'Aumale his position from that moment became difficult.

When the Revolution of 1848 broke out, he sold his property, at considerable loss, and returned to live with his grandmother.

At that time France and all Europe vibrated with the great words, Liberty and Equality. In Gaston they found an ardent enthusiast, and the young man plunged into the election campaign in the Comtat-Venaissin. As a republican candidate, he sought especially the support of the small farmers and the workers, but nevertheless made his speeches in evening dress and white gloves. In the district he was always called "the Count." "*Vaqui el condé*," people would say as he passed, and throughout his adventurous career the name stuck to him. And he was in every respect the clan chieftain, the man who commands.

This was, indeed, only too true. Enveloped in his own ardent personality and unable to conform to a party program, he was defeated

at the polls by a wine merchant of Carpentras.

At thirty-two Gaston found himself practically ruined, and he was obliged to ask his father for the remainder of his legacy from his mother.

Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon had taken as his second wife an amiable woman, who invited her stepson to visit Boulbon, assuring him that his father would be happy to see him. Gaston, his heart overflowing with tenderness, hastened to the château.

When he arrived his father was waiting for him in the drawing-room. Shaking hands with him, the old man looked him up and down and said he would see him again at supper. His stepmother's warm reception cheered Gaston somewhat, but as he was entering the dining-room that evening Madame de Raousset took him aside and told him that his father had been disagreeably surprised to see that he wore the fashionable monocle and beard, that he considered these newfangled habits disgusting and that he asked him to discard the eye-glass and shave off his beard before sitting down at table.

In order to conciliate his father, Gaston sacrificed his handsome blond beard. The next day before dinner, when the young man greeted his stepmother and his father, the Count looked him over again and, turning to his wife, said:

“My dear, will you kindly tell my son that I find him decidedly less pleasing shaved than with a beard. Please ask him to let it grow again and not to appear in my presence until then.”

Gaston went to eat at the local inn, left Boulbon and never saw his father again.

About that time strange tidings were arriving from America. The newspapers reported that in the neighborhood of San Francisco, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the sands of the Sacramento River, gold was to be had merely for the picking up. Throughout Europe popular imagination was stirred to fever pitch. Emigration companies were formed. In Paris a lottery called the “Golden Ingot” promised winners the price of their transportation to San Francisco, and the

tickets were eagerly seized upon. From all quarters the dreamers, ne'er-do-wells and desperadoes of Europe rushed toward the El Dorado of the new continent.

Gaston, already far on the road to penury, saw new hope of that life of adventure of which he had always dreamed. Even before embarking, he had visions of his triumphant return on the vessel of the Argonauts. But first it was necessary to find funds to pay his passage. From the château of Vezey, where Gaston, no doubt penniless, was staying with friends, he wrote to one of his comrades asking him to use his influence with the director of the factory of Saint Étienne to obtain for him three hundred carbines on credit. Certain of being able to sell them in San Francisco at considerable profit, he offered the Saint Étienne factory as security notes payable in six months.

With his habitual impetuosity he added as postscript: "Consult your heart, old friend, and you will render me this service. To me, it is a matter of life or death. With your help, I shall fall on my feet when I arrive in Cali-

fornia; otherwise I shall break my neck. Farewell.

“If you delay too long, I shall have no money with which to leave.”

It seems likely that his friend failed him but that he was able to obtain a little money elsewhere, for he embarked on the *Avon* at Bordeaux with his carbine, a little baggage and a third-class ticket.

The passengers were nearly all emigrants, who, intoxicated by the mirage of gold, talked of nothing but the El Dorado of California. During the first days out, Gaston amused himself by observing several picturesque types of fanatics.

He was particularly interested in four young men whose heads had been turned by the recently published *Three Musketeers*. They called each other d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis. D'Artagnan was a student of chemistry, Porthos a commercial traveler, Athos a medical student and Aramis studied law. Putting their savings together, they had invested in a little machine for

dredging the rivers and sifting the sands, an invention illustrated in detail in the newspapers of the day, which also gave instructions for its use. They planned to carry out a scientific exploitation of the California rivers and bring back an immense fortune.

There was, in addition, a former cook of the Comte de Foix who had so compromised himself in the Revolution of 1848 that it had become dangerous for him to live in France. He proposed to organize a popular kitchen in San Francisco and preach there the doctrine of socialism.

A sort of half-mad charlatan spoke mysteriously of a magic wand he had invented that would indicate the presence of gold as far as twenty yards underground. He offered shares in the company, "The Magic Wand," for fifty francs, and disposed of six thousand francs' worth on the boat.

On August sixth the *Avon* touched the American continent at the port of Chagres, at the entrance of the Isthmus of Panama. There the passengers had to disembark and cross the isthmus in a small boat on the

Chagres River in order to reach the Pacific Ocean at Panama.

“At Chagres our first step was to obtain a craft to go up the Caimans River. Eleven of us hired a sort of ship’s boat made of rotting planks, propelled by six native rowers who looked like bandits. We stayed the first night in a kind of shed, constructed of planks badly put together, that was called an inn.

“The following evening we had to change our boat, as the Chagres River was no longer deep enough for our first craft. We continued our journey in Indian canoes, and twelve hours later we reached Goyona, where the rains forced us to spend the night.

“You can not conceive what the rains in this country are like. The vegetation prevents the sun from drying the soil, and from it dense vapors continually arise, only to fall again in heavy showers, after which the sun reappears more fiery than ever. An instant later comes another sudden downpour, and the deluges are accompanied by terrific crashes of thunder and lightning. While the storm lasts the rest of nature is completely hushed, but once it is

over the piercing shrieks of the monkeys, the howling of wild animals and the songs of every sort of bird are deafening.

“You are, too, in a state of perpetual amazement before the magnificence of nature, the inconceivable richness of the vegetation in flowers, fruits, colors and perfumes. The water upon which the boat glides is full of all kinds of fish, and is so limpid and transparent that they could be caught with the hand. Birds are in infinite number and variety, and of all colors. Monkeys, holding on by their tails, swing from one bank to the other on the trailing creepers that are covered with fragrant red, white and yellow flowers. Both banks are bordered by high walls of foliage, impenetrable to the eye. Two or three times we stopped to take some refreshments in huts pompously styled ‘Princes’ Hotel’ or ‘Ambassadors’ Hotel,’ which deserve their names only for their excessive charges.

“Panama is a gloomy old town, where the French die like flies of cholera, yellow fever and dysentery. The hotels, or at least the inns, are filled with travelers awaiting the de-

parture of the boat and fearful of arriving too late. Some, impatient, set out in small boats. The black vomit, it is true, rages through the town, and a day's delay may well be fatal. No doubt this is the reason why the fare on the boats has been tripled; last month it was fifty dollars, second class, and now it is one hundred and fifty."

On November sixth Gaston embarked on a miserable little freighter called the *Ecuador*, and four days later he passed through the Golden Gate, at the entrance of the bay of San Francisco.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF A CIVILIZATION

IN 1845 San Francisco was still called Yerba Buena and was nothing more than a wretched Mexican village, or rather hamlet, of three hundred inhabitants on the Pacific coast, near the mouth of the Sacramento River.

It consisted of a few wooden or adobe houses, inhabited by seal hunters, whalers, trappers who hunted in the neighboring mountains, and several dealers who bought furs and sold them to the Russian and Chinese merchants calling at Yerba Buena.

In the surrounding districts the Mexicans on the ranchos cultivated vast tracts of territory.

An old mission of the Spanish Jesuits, occupied at this time by the Franciscans, overlooked the town. In the middle of the bay was

a fort, more or less in ruins, defended by two rusty cannon manned by a feeble old gunner. When foreign war-ships came into the harbor, the old man would borrow powder from them in order to give them the customary salute.

The panorama of the bay, shut in by the Golden Gate, was admirable. The rarefied atmosphere, perfumed by the scents of the sea and forests, intoxicated like wine.

At this time men still knew the joy of an untroubled existence. California was a dependency of the Mexican Republic, but Mexico City was a thousand leagues beyond the deserts and the seas, and California existed in the most care-free independence.

The liberty, the abundance of game, fish and fruits of the soil made of it a sort of earthly paradise. People were content to live a leisurely existence, working only to provide themselves with food. The men smoked and played the guitar, while the women gave a little attention to their houses,—which in no way resembled Dutch interiors,—painted



Mexican Homesteads in Yerba Buena

themselves, gossiped and smoked cigarettes. Apparently their morals were easy, but no one complained, not even their husbands.

On their ranchos, the rancheros lived like little kings. They wore magnificent costumes,—leather trousers ornamented with silver buttons, vests and sashes of silk, and a kind of high-crowned sombrero ornamented with golden ribbons. Their stirrups were of gold and silver.

The women wore short skirts and open bodices. Their bare feet were thrust into doe-skin moccasins, and their hair hung in long braids from beneath large straw hats.

The hospitality of these people was charming. They had only one unpleasant characteristic: their habit of killing in the presence of their guests the ox or calf which was to be served for dinner. Consequently, the terraces of their ranchos resembled a slaughter-house, around which the flies swarmed.

In the savannahs and the forests at the foot of the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevadas, roved the Sioux and Cherokee. As the white men had not yet tried to take

their hunting-grounds from them, friendly relations prevailed. They exchanged furs for tobacco, rum, blankets, cotton cloth, powder and small household articles.

It must be said, however, that these Indians did not altogether resemble those of the Feni-more Cooper stories. They were decked with feathers, painted their bodies red, and squatted on their heels to smoke the pipe of peace or war. They danced and sang, and their medicine men invoked the Great Spirit and the Manitou. But they were horribly dirty and covered with vermin. Atala smelled so disagreeably that Chateaubriand could not approach him without holding his nose.

Crafty, knowing neither honor nor respect for law, their only interest was war, and their greatest pleasure lay in torturing their prisoners, which they did with a skill that only the Chinese could have envied. Scalping was one of their mildest methods. Generally the unfortunate victims, bound to the torture stake and burned by slow fires, lingered in agony several days. Such occasions were festivals to the tribe, the members of which

danced and sang around the captives and made the pleasure last as long as possible. The women were particularly adept in methods of torture. They made little wads of cotton, which they soaked in alcohol, set alight and placed on the body of the victim. These they would leave until the burned flesh showed that a vital organ was endangered; then they would remove it and, with great cries of joy, put it aside, giving proof of a singular knowledge of anatomy.

When the supply of prisoners from inter-tribal wars gave out, the women, in order not to lose their skill, would amuse themselves by torturing animals. Now and again some luckless trapper or trader would furnish occasion for a party.

This did not, however, prevent the Indians from listening to missionaries who wished to convert them to Christianity, provided the missionaries came with hands full of presents. As the red man's religion was nothing more than a superstitious belief in good and bad spirits, represented by daubed rags kept in the tent of the medicine man, the idea of apostasy

gave them no qualms. The mysteries and exalted morality of the Catholic religion were acceptable so long as they were accompanied by tobacco, blankets and other presents, though it happened too, from time to time, that in a sudden fit of bad temper the new converts would kill the missionaries or torture them.

Before winter, their time of famine, they sent their children to the Franciscan mission at Yerba Buena. The young redskins passed some unpleasant days there, received the baptism and, when spring came, disappeared.

These were the gold days in California.

American civilization was about to change all this. Already it was reaching out toward California and advancing with the irresistible force of an inundation.

It began by infiltration. Little by little traders settled in the towns, built houses, organized clubs, developed communities.

As they were intelligent, active and ambitious to make money they began, as was inevitable, to oust the lazy, happy-go-lucky and indifferent Mexicans.

In 1847 the population of Yerba Buena had greatly increased, and nine-tenths of the inhabitants were Americans. The roadstead began to fill with ships, life became active and disagreeable and men began to know unhappiness. There were courts, a police force, saloons—in short, all the benefits of civilization.

But this was not enough for the Americans. They found that the Mexicans had too much voice in the growing town and especially in the government of California.

At Washington, politicians only awaited the opportunity to absorb, by hook or by crook, that desirable province into the union of the United States. And, as the occasion did not present itself, they decided to provoke it.

The procedure is classic,—organize disturbances, suppress them and then take advantage of the situation to bully the government concerned for being incapable of maintaining order. The plan always works.

The outbreak in California was called the Bear Flag Revolt. Under the pretext of escorting a scientific expedition, a certain

Captain Frémont, an American Army officer of French descent, arrived from New York at the head of a troop of several hundred men, who were ostensibly sent to protect the party against the attacks of Indians during their long journey.

General Castro, then Governor of California, became alarmed, as well he might, and notified Frémont that he must leave his soldiers on the other side of the frontier. Frémont replied by seizing several ranches and fortifying them. At the same time, as if accidentally, the Americans at Yerba Buena, pretending to have been wronged by the Mexicans, organized a riot and hoisted a flag of white flannel painted with the design of a star and a bear.

The Mexican authorities threw several of the ring-leaders of the revolt into prison, and war was declared. It was, however, nothing more than guerrilla warfare. The Californian army was composed of three hundred men and two cannon, one of which was practically useless. On the other hand, the Americans had a thousand soldiers, com-

manded by three generals, Frémont, Pike and Soakley. After a series of skirmishes, ambushes and betrayals, the Americans became masters of the three principal towns of California, Los Angeles, Monterey and Yerba Buena. From that moment, resistance was impossible. Early in 1848, the treaty of Cotuenga transferred California to the United States.

Yerba Buena became San Francisco.

Several months later a man named Brannan ran like a madman through the streets, shaking a bottle filled with a glistening yellow powder and shouting, "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!"

It was indeed gold that filled the bottle, the first grains of the phenomenal harvest.

At Coloma, on the American River, a man superintending work on a sawmill noticed some brilliant particles in the earth that had been washed by the tail-race. Curious, he collected some of them and showed them to his fellow workers, believing he had discovered gold. Two days later he carried them to John Sutter, the owner of the mill.

Sutter was by no means an ordinary man. A former officer of the Swiss Guard of Charles X, he found himself, after the Revolution of 1830, without employment, and had, like many of his fellows, been attracted by the American adventure.

For several years he had led the rough life of the trapper, wandering from Canada as far south as Louisiana. In 1845 he was at Yerba Buena. With what money he had he bought a boat made of bark and a little rusty cannon that he discovered in the Mexican *presidio*. He filled the boat with provisions, put in the cannon, hired an Indian neophyte from the mission and went up the Sacramento River about twenty miles, as far as its junction with the American River.

He stopped at the entrance of a valley covered with cedar, pine and oak. A tribe of Blackfoot Indians frequented it, but Sutter understood their language a little and knew them to be inoffensive if they were not drunk or had not seen blood.

With the help of the neophyte he built a log house, cleared several acres of ground and

sowed it with barley, selling the crop the following year in the Yerba Buena market. With the money thus obtained he bought a few cows and a bull.

Two years later he had become the owner of a domain of several thousand acres, which he called New Helvetia. He possessed two thousand head of cattle and five hundred horses. His little log house had become a fort defended by twelve cannon and a garrison composed of Indian mercenaries and several backwoodsmen who had tired of the wandering life. There he lived like a powerful feudal lord, with a great display of pomp and an authority which extended over the whole of northern California. Both Mexicans and Americans were glad to call upon him for help from time to time. Devoting himself exclusively to agriculture and commerce, he grew enormously rich.

When his superintendent brought him the particles he had found near the mill, Sutter immediately recognized the grains as gold.

He was, indeed, not greatly surprised at the discovery. He knew that there was gold in

the American River, as Indians had told him so and had shown him some of the dust without realizing its value. At the Yerba Buena mission he had found in a bundle of old papers the report of a Spanish missionary informing the Father Superior of the discovery that he had made of gold nuggets in the rocks of the San Jacinto Mountains. The Father Superior was a philosopher who knew men, and realizing that gold made them wicked and unhappy, had consigned the missionary's report to the limbo of lost things.

It is also said that in the seventeenth century the Mexican Government, knowing of the gold mines of Colorado, had purposely neglected them; but this seems improbable.

John Sutter was neither a mystic nor a scoffer. He loved riches for the power they gave, and for that reason he feared that the discovery of gold might rob him of his authority. It meant a new régime in which he would have no standing; he loved the domain that he had created and feared to see it overthrown by the pick-axes of the gold-seekers.

Consequently, he at first tried to conceal the

discovery, and got his workers to promise to say nothing about it to the outside world.

The secret, however, soon leaked out. A messenger sent by Sutter to Monterey stayed in San Francisco and showed a sample of the metal to a miner, who at once declared it to be gold.

Six months later, the domain of John Sutter was invaded and dug up. When he, enraged, wanted to fire on the intruders, his soldiers and servants threatened to kill him if he attempted to prevent them from turning the river from its course to search its bed.

Vanquished by gold, he abandoned New Helvetia and went to found another domain farther away, on the banks of the Rio Margarita, where the diabolical metal had not yet appeared.

From Canada to New Orleans the news of the discovery of gold spread rapidly; the United States was athrob with it.

The farmers were prosperous, the towns flourishing, and to reach California it was necessary to travel hundreds of miles across

the mountains and deserts and endure exposure to hunger and thirst, as well as the attacks of the Indians. But the lure of gold was not to be resisted.

Several families would gather together in caravans composed of wagons drawn by teams of mules. Under the tarpaulin, women, children, clothes and provisions were crowded together, while the men, rifles in hand, rode or walked beside them. Drove of cattle followed the caravan to supply it with food.

Within three weeks eighteen thousand persons crossed the Missouri. All day long the wagons streamed along the trail in single file, and at night their camp-fires lighted up the solitude of the plains.

There were two main routes or trails to California. The most frequented was the northern route by way of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, the desert, the Humboldt River and the Sierra Nevadas. The southern route followed the old trail to Santa Fé, crossed the Colorado desert and entered California by the south.

Both routes were extremely perilous, but

the caravans following the northern route ran the greater risks. The Great Salt Lake Desert, and Death Valley in the Sierra Nevadas, became legendary as the scenes of many horrors. A terrible story was told about the Donner caravan, which was delayed in the desert and was only ready to cross the Sierra Nevadas on the first day of October.

The snow fell earlier than usual, blocking the way of the emigrants. Their animals perished in a blizzard and soon the unfortunate adventurers began to die of hunger and cold. There were frightful scenes of cannibalism. At last several men who were still able to walk left the camp to seek help on the other side of the mountains. Ten perished and only three arrived at Sutter's Fort.

John Sutter organized a relief party, but it was necessary to wait until the snow melted in order to pass through the defiles. When the rescuers drew near to the camp of desolation they met a man—or rather the specter of a man—skeleton-like, lost, half-mad, who cried out to them: "The boys are gone! The boys are gone!"

In the camp they found the dead bodies of the luckless emigrants half devoured by wolves and bears, and a woman still alive who had begun to eat the corpse of her child.

Such disasters, however, did not discourage the gold-seekers, and the stream of emigrants increased continually.

In San Francisco and in the neighboring diggings there were, in 1851, more than a hundred thousand newcomers, who lived as best they could in tents or wooden huts.

Gaston arrived at the Golden Gate and disembarked at San Francisco on a beautiful morning. The rising sun gilded the mountains, and the blue waters of the Pacific were so clear that the fish could be seen playing among the sea weed, as in an aquarium. On the shores of the islands that filled the bay seals sported.

The *Ecuador* anchored in the harbor several hundred yards from the shore, and a boat transported the passengers to the sandy beach. Gaston and the Four Musketeers, who bore their dredging and sifting machine with them

like a shrine, hailed an Indian half-breed, who was as lazy and dirty as a Neapolitan lazaroni, and ordered him to lead them to the Hotel Frémont, which had been recommended to them. It was, at that time, the best in San Francisco. Built on a sand-hill several hundred yards from the new city, it was nothing more than a miserable farm building.

The proprietor, a Frenchman named Gosset, presuming that they had less money than the Americans who might come that way, told them at first that there were no vacant rooms. After a lengthy discussion, he consented to let them have a room and a shed, where, in place of beds, there were hammocks covered with bison skins. The Musketeers took the shed, while Gaston installed himself in the room, or rather uncurtained attic, furnished with a chair and a rickety table on which a broken water jug and a cracked bowl were balanced. The price of the room was three dollars a day; a breakfast consisting of a slice of smoked salmon, bread and some barley beer cost a dollar.

Gaston considered the three thousand

frances in his belt, compared his capital with the cost of living in San Francisco, and realized that before long he would be at the end of his means.

As soon as he was rested he went to see Monsieur Dillon, the French Consul, on Merchant Street, taking with him a letter of recommendation.

In an unpretentious brick house he found an amiable but very reserved man. Monsieur Dillon had been tutor to the children of Monsieur de Montalivet, whose influence was responsible for the Consul's appointment to the San Francisco post. He had retained, from his first occupation, his pedagogical manner, and assumed a superior air toward the French who came to see him on arriving at San Francisco.

It is true indeed that the greater part of these ne'er-do-wells were only a source of trouble to him.

Gaston interested him much more than the others, and very soon he offered him as much friendship as he was capable of giving any one. At the outset, however, he discouraged

him and advised him to return to France. Gaston thanked him for his solicitude, but did not accept his advice. He was well aware of the difficulties that lay before him and prepared to meet them. All that Dillon could do was to wish him good luck.

The next day Gaston and the Four Musketeers embarked on a little steamboat of a primitive sort, which, heaving along on its two wheels, went up the Sacramento River as far as the Gold Flat. All along the river and among the rocks of the neighboring mountains the placers succeeded one another without interruption. Near Marysville, on the banks of the American River, the five Frenchmen found a vacant claim and there set up their tent.

Taking possession was quite simple. All that was necessary was to plant a cross with a flag on the ground that was to be exploited, but it was necessary to begin operations at once, for after five days the right of possession lapsed.

Gold was found in the river beds, among the sands, in the form of grains, or in the rocks in

nuggets mixed with quartz. In order to sift the sand, the miners made use of a sort of cradle, the bottom of which was perforated like a colander. In this they rocked the wet sand so that lighter substances came to the surface and the heavy grains containing the gold remained at the bottom. The residue was then roasted, like coffee, in a furnace, after which it was crushed. By this process the sand became magnetic, and by using a magnet the particles of iron were easily separated. Next they threw in some mercury, which amalgamated itself with the gold, and by passing the residue through a retort the gold was isolated.

Among the rocks the work was harder, more uncertain, but sometimes more remunerative. The rocks had to be broken to find the veins or pockets in which lay nuggets of the pure metal. Skill consisted in discovering the gold pockets by an estimate of probabilities and a flair for the ground.

The work, however, was extremely hazardous. It was quite necessary to discount the legends regarding the Californian El Dorado.

While it was true that the miners sometimes made marvelous finds, they had in general more disappointments than successes. Often it took them several weeks to accumulate a few ounces of gold.

The cost of living, too, was very high in the camps. A miner's earnings, as a matter of fact, seldom exceeded ten dollars a day, and he could not live for less than five.

Gaston and the Four Musketeers spent three months at the Horse Shoe Camp, which was composed of about a hundred tents and huts made of branches. It contained three restaurants, saloons and stores where food and clothes were sold. Everything was bought literally by weight of gold, as the miners paid for their purchases only with gold dust.

During the day the desert camp was silent. The tents and huts remained open, and though the fortune of the occupants, in the form of gold dust enclosed in a sack, was hung from a nail and in full view of all passers-by, theft from the tents was unknown. The miners killed each other on the trail, but never robbed each other in the camps.

By the end of the summer Gaston and the Musketeers began to be discouraged. The only result of the famous machine had been to provoke the jeers of the miners. It was a laboratory invention which could not be adapted to the difficulties of the ground, and in an impatient impulse d'Artagnan kicked it into the river.

Indeed, most of the French whom the thirst for gold had attracted to the diggings experienced the same discouragement. They had none of the qualities necessary to success, and lacked the patience, eagerness and vigor of the Americans.

Aramis was the first to desert. For some time he had appeared rather mysterious, and on Sundays, instead of going hunting with his comrades, would go to Marysville, where it was thought he carried on some romantic affair. One day he told them he was engaged and was soon to be married. His future father-in-law was the grocer who brought supplies to the camp, and through him Aramis had met his wife-to-be. His marriage removed him further, no doubt, from the profession for

which he had been studying, but brought him nearer to fortune.

Several days later, Athos also announced his intention of leaving. A large hotel had just been opened in Marysville and he was going there as bookkeeper.

Porthos alone persisted. His great physical strength enabled him to rock the cradle. He began, too, to develop a flair for gold, became Americanized and ended up as a wealthy banker in Los Angeles.

Gaston and d'Artagnan decided to return to San Francisco. There d'Artagnan would be able to make use of his knowledge of medicine. Gaston, however, was more anxious as to his future. Sometimes he had spells of gloom, and asked himself what he was doing in California, but his adventurous spirit quickly gained the upper hand.

After each had accumulated about a thousand dollars, they embarked on the little boat that went down the Sacramento River.

At that time San Francisco gave the impression that a reconstruction of the world

was in progress. It resembled a crucible in which the old civilization was being transmuted into a new. There were no longer any social classes, and the only superiority was that won by strength or astuteness. In that new childhood of civilization intelligence was a useless luxury. Useless, too, were the social virtues of civility, charity, religion and attachment to home and family. Even love no longer counted. Men were face to face with life in its sternest and most implacable form. It was necessary to work to live, or die alone, for no one troubled himself about any one else.

Each gained a livelihood as best he could. The strong, the shrewd and the lucky swallowed up the weak and unfortunate, and in that life and death struggle the men of the upper classes were the most handicapped.

A man who had been a side-show Samson became a banker, and took a marquis as his head clerk. A count got a job in a hair-dressing business owned by his servant, who had come with him to San Francisco carrying his bags. Several Frenchmen were cooks in the

hotels and eating-houses. Some sang and danced in the saloons, while others were boot-blacks and dishwashers—the occupations of those who could do nothing else. Men of birth were hard put to it to keep from starving. This, however, did not prevent them from spending their evenings arguing and speechifying in the saloons, instead of banding together against want.

The Americans, calm, strong, purposeful and silent, regarded their restlessness with astonishment mingled with disdain. Beside these bearded, long-haired, phlegmatic giants, with their high boots, red shirts, and revolvers sticking from their belts, the French aristocrats seemed curiously frail. Some of the French wore out the formal clothes which, in the belief that no gentleman could travel without a black suit, they had brought with them to San Francisco, and complained bitterly about the careless dress of the citizens.

The streets were obstructed and dirty beyond words. Dusty during the dry days, they became, in the rainy season from October to April, veritable sloughs wherein vehicles, and

sometimes men, were engulfed. More than one drunken fellow came out of a saloon to sleep his last sleep in the mud.

Refuse of all sorts and the abandoned remains of animal carcasses from the butchers rotted in the streets. What was particularly striking was the quantity of dirty linen scattered about. The cost of washing was so high that it was more economical to buy new linen than to have the old laundered, and consequently the soiled apparel littered the streets.

A Frenchman, formerly an attorney, conceived the idea of collecting the garments, having them washed and selling them. From this he made a profit that enabled him to buy a laundry and he grew rich.

Living, indeed, was in all respects very expensive. A pair of shoes cost thirty dollars, a suit of clothes sixty. The prices were regulated by the arrival of boats in the port, and a sort of exchange that was constantly active came into existence. As at the present day, the manual trades were at a premium. A carpenter earned ten dollars a day, a mason

fifteen, and other trades were paid accordingly.

At night the miners and workers spent their money in the two principal saloons, the "El Dorado" and the "Polka." These establishments were gilded and double gilded, but badly lighted by oil lamps; in the smoke men and women sang, danced, and, above all, played at monte, faro and lansquenet. Each man kept his revolver on the table, and often the parties ended in shooting. No one seemed to pay attention where the shots went. The dead and wounded were carried out and the game continued.

Along with this collection of men of all nations—Chinese, Maltese, Hindus, Mexicans and Americans—were relatively few women, whom the men paid by filling their hands with gold dust. The men never fought over them; the cutting of a pack of cards decided the matter.

In the streets strolled certain individuals who wore soft hats pulled down on the side over one ear, and who were looked upon with admiration and respect: these were the "des-

peradoes," each of whom had killed at least one man.

Fortune-tellers and phrenologists trafficked in hope.

The policing of the streets was no better organized than the sanitary arrangements and the inspection of public premises. Pilfering, burglary and murder became daily events. Bands organized in groups under the name of "regulators" entered and plundered the houses they were supposed to protect.

The magistrates, bought or indifferent, were the accomplices of the thieves. In 1850 there were twelve hundred murders in San Francisco in a population of sixty thousand.

It was in these conditions that the Vigilance Committees were formed. Certain citizens, who were no more commendable than the others, but who possessed more energy and more public spirit, met to organize an independent jurisdiction based on the court and jury. Cases were tried on the spot and verdicts were immediately executed. This system was called lynch law, though the origin of the term is doubtful.

As these Vigilance Committees had no prisons at their disposal, sentences were confined to flogging or death. A whip and a gallows were all that was necessary.

Sometimes it happened that there was not time to obtain a gallows, and then the condemned man had to content himself with a beam in a barn or the branch of a tree. Curiously enough, the criminal never resisted, but manifested good will and smiling accommodation. In San Francisco men set little store on the life for which they fought so feverishly.

Gaston, who was present at several of these summary executions, left accounts of two typical cases.

The first is that of an Irishman named Jimmy Bell, who had killed an American miner as he came out of the El Dorado saloon and taken his pouch of gold dust, returning to the saloon with it immediately to play faro.

The crime was flagrant, and Jimmy did not deny it. He was perfectly calm, even jovial, and did not lose the chance to inject a playful word or two in the free-for-all trial. It lasted

only a short time and Jimmy was forthwith unanimously condemned to be hanged. He received the sentence without flinching, only asking permission to light his pipe.

One of the judges invited him to speak for a moment with the chaplain of the Reformed Temple, but Jimmy, who was a free thinker, declared he had nothing to say to the chaplain or any one else in the world. However, he asked the foreman of the jury to send to his sister in Ballinekill, a little purse of gold dust, which was very likely the one he had taken from the miner he had killed. Then he wanted to know where the gallows was.

The foreman of the jury told him that there was not one available at the moment, but that the big sycamore in the middle of the square appeared quite suitable. Jimmy raised no objection, and asked for the hangman. He was told that he was much too good a fellow to be executed by a regular hangman, and that it would be a more dignified proceeding to hang himself. To do this he had only to have a noose placed round his neck, climb the tree as far as the first branch on a ladder, taking

the end of the rope with him, attach the rope to a branch and then gently fall off.

The grim humor of this self-execution seemed to appeal to Jimmy. Sitting astride the branch he made a little speech to the assembled crowd, of which the gist was that the miner he had killed was nothing but a rogue. The crowd listened to him laughingly for a time, and then grew a bit impatient. Several cries of "Go ahead!" interrupted him, and Jimmy, vexed, let himself drop into eternity.

The only real trouble that he caused began after his death. Two surgeons who wanted his body had a heated argument and fought a duel, in which one of them was killed. But Jimmy could hardly be blamed for that.

The other story is that of Bob Williams. One Saturday night Bob and his friend, Jip, had drunk a good deal more than was good for them. This was excusable in men who had come back from the mines with purses filled with gold dust. The two men, however, had sought further distraction and had swaggered out of the El Dorado, shouting, jostling

passers-by and firing their revolvers. They were in such a state of over-excitement that they were put out of Anna Belly's house, where there were Mexican, Chinese, German and Italian women—and Anna Belly was tolerant enough!

Staggering along, they arrived in front of the house of Rosita Monte, a Mexican woman who lived alone. They stopped, and Bob suggested that they should pay her a visit. Jip began to laugh. They knocked at the door, but naturally Rosita did not open it. Then, growing exasperated, Bob hurled himself against the door, which gave way so suddenly that he fell into the hall. As the police were coming on the scene, Jip took to his heels, while Bob, somewhat sobered by a sprained wrist, went home and slept heavily till next day. On waking, his first thought was that he had conducted himself like a scamp, for Bob had been well brought up and had even spent some time in the mission of the Franciscan fathers. He made up his mind to go and apologize to Rosita Monte, and having put on his boots and belt, for he slept fully dressed on his truckle-

bed, he went to the Mexican's house. On his arrival Rosita asked him what he wanted, and when he told her the reason of his visit she began to abuse him violently and called him a "coyote." Bob laughed and, acting on the theory that the best way to pacify women is to make a fuss over them, he tried to kiss her. Hastily drawing a revolver from the folds of her rebozo, she fired and Bob fell with a bullet in his heart. He died five minutes later.

At the sound of the shot the neighbors came running. Rosita Monte was immediately taken before the Vigilance Committee, tried and condemned to be hanged. She died bravely, like a Spaniard.

At San Francisco Gaston hit on an unexpected opportunity. As the city was not yet equipped with a wharf, boats remained in the roadstead several days while waiting to be unloaded.

Gaston went into partnership with a friend of his, Monsieur Pigné-Dupuytren, who had just arrived in San Francisco, and between them they hired a barge and unloaded ships

that came into the harbor. In this way they earned about twenty dollars a day.

Gaston was then living in a furnished room in Merchant Street, and taking his meals in an eating house in Frémont Street frequented by French men and women of all trades. It was known as the "French Refuge," and the proprietor, Hubert Sanders, grew rich lending money to his customers at a high rate of interest.

Here there was a lot of talk of a certain Frenchman called the Marquis de Pindray, about whom all sorts of legends were told. He did not live in the French colony, but hunted in the neighboring mountains and appeared from time to time at San Francisco with a cart-load of game.

One night, Gaston, feeling a little gloomy, sought distraction amid the noise of the "Polka" saloon.

That night the gambling tables were deserted. All the clients of the place were gathered around the one billiard table. On top of it two men were fighting with knives: an American miner, long-haired and bearded,

and a Frenchman. Standing at opposite corners of the table each man sought an opening, knife in hand. At last the miner, crying out like a wild animal, gave a leap forward; his adversary awaited the onset with a smile. The struggle lasted a few seconds and the miner collapsed in a pool of blood. He was carried out. The Frenchman leaped down from the table, as calm as if he were descending from a stage. Women embraced him and applauded.

“Pindray! Hurrah for Pindray!”

Gaston drew near him and asked:

“Have I the honor of addressing the Marquis de Pindray?”

“Yes, sir. . . . And yourself?”

“Comte de Raousset-Boulbon.”

The two shook hands.

CHAPTER III

THE MARQUIS DE PINDRAY

THE Marquis Charles de Pindray belonged to one of the oldest families of Poitou, and he had been the despair of it. In many families there are from time to time throwbacks in whom untamed ancestors seem to live again. They find it impossible to adapt themselves to the restrictions of modern life, which stifles them; they can breathe only by throwing off its bonds. In other times and in other circumstances, they would perhaps have been destined to great achievements. If Bonaparte had not begun his career under the Revolution, would he have become Napoleon I? Charles de Pindray lived in the reign of Louis Philippe when there was no room in France for extremists.

His childhood resembled Duguesclin's. It

was spent in marauding expeditions and battles with the children of the neighboring farms. The boy had the herculean physical vigor of a constable under the blond and frail exterior of a little English lord. His mother, very much occupied with social activities outside the home, did not give him much attention. His father, a great hunter and a great drinker, was amused by the boy's pranks, but not relishing the responsibility for them, entrusted him to the Jesuits of Poitiers, just as Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon had sent his son to the Jesuits of Freiburg.

The two boys, however, were very different; Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon was imaginative and sentimental, while Charles de Pindray was a little animal, full of vitality and almost devoid of sentiment. The skill of the Jesuit fathers failed to influence him. Growing discouraged, they asked his father to take him back. He was then sixteen.

Monsieur de Pindray, who valued his tranquillity, put his son in a sort of reformatory, where the boy's difficult character became embittered and misanthropic. Finally he ran

away and enlisted in a regiment of spahis, and at eighteen took part in the Algerian campaign.

After the death of his father he inherited a considerable fortune, and lived for some time in the Château de Pindray at Poitiers. His escapades are still remembered in the town. He carried off women, fought duels, and, when he had exhausted all the pleasures Poitiers could supply, went to Paris, where he ruined himself in gambling. Then, being in need of money, he sought it, not caring where or how he found it.

At this point his life became troubled, and to understand him it is necessary to appreciate the mentality of aristocrats of his character and time.

In 1845 Pindray was like a feudal lord of the sixteenth century. In his eyes, the universe was divided into two categories: himself and the others. The others were creatures who should minister to his pleasure, unquestioningly. He forgot, however, that for a century and a half these creatures had been united under the protection of a certain power that

called itself the Law and that they were determined to be victimized no longer without calling for help.

Forgetful of this changed situation, Pindray engaged in certain financial adventures which terminated in the police court, and only escaped the consequences by flying from the country.

Then, America, immense, wild, free, attracted him. People had not yet begun to talk of gold mines, and it was not gold that Pindray sought, but freedom from restrictions and solitude.

For two years he wandered in Massachusetts, leading the hard life of a trapper. He rarely spoke of himself, but a few words that he let drop from time to time led to the belief that he had known cruel moments. One of his friends asked him one day what he most wished for, and he replied: "Peace of mind!"

In 1849 he was hunting near Humboldt Bay, on the Nestachié River when he met a Frenchman wandering in the same neighborhood. This man gave a characteristic account of his first interview with Pindray:

"I shall never forget his arrival at Humboldt Bay. It was night when he came—and such a night! We were five or six men of different races gathered together in a cabin, the canvas roof of which exuded a damp vapor from the rain that fell in torrents outside. Through the badly joined planks which formed the walls the wind blew out the flames of our candles. Outside the sea roared among the rocks, and over our heads passed the breath of the hurricane, mingled with the groans of the forest pines. Inside the cabin were carbines, pistols, implements for digging and for building, some large kitchen utensils, blankets and several large bison skins that served as beds. Sitting on blocks of wood around a case, we were trying to kill time with cards, tobacco and grog. Some one banged at the door. A tall man stood there. We stared at him, dumb with surprise. The old serape, the large-brimmed Mexican hat worn at a jaunty angle, the long American carbine, all suggested Pindray, of whom we had heard so much.

"It was indeed he—thin-cheeked, hollow of



Pindray Rides through the Storm

voice, and worn by fatigue. After a few days of rest, he was himself again. And soon I came under that influence from which it was difficult to escape. He slept hardly at all, and spent nearly all night seated near the fire, pipe in mouth, his head between his hands, lost in dreams.

“At daybreak, when we got up, he had already gone out to hunt.”

The following year Pindray was in Oregon, hunting the bison with a tribe of Cherokees, when news of the discovery of gold in California spread throughout America. What attracted Pindray to San Francisco can only be guessed at. He had never wanted to make a fortune, and he was neither able nor eager to return to Europe. It can only be supposed that after two years of wild life he was seized by a desire to know again something approaching civilization.

Some of the caravans from Missouri crossed the Oregon desert. Pindray joined one of them, and by his energy and authority saved it from a disaster like that which overtook the Donner outfit.

On arriving in California he at once went to the gold diggings of the Sacramento River. Establishing himself at Carson Bar, he dug and sifted until, at the end of a week, he had accumulated fifty dollars. Then he changed his claim, planted his cross at Croyton Bar, began again the work of digging and sifting and after a week had earned forty dollars. In the meantime he had been involved in quarrels with two American miners; he killed one, and got from the other a knife wound in the arm.

Finding this wearisome work not worth the trouble it brought him, he left his spade and pick on his claim one fine morning and set out for San Francisco.

In the city, meat was scarce and very expensive. A pound of beef cost four or five dollars, and other meats were priced accordingly, in spite of the fact that game abounded in the neighboring mountains. Several trappers brought venison to the market, but only irregularly, and in small quantities.

Pindray, who had ambitious ideas, undertook to stock the San Francisco market, and entered into a contract with a dealer who en-

gaged to buy all the game he brought and supply the necessary funds.

His first step was to buy a boat, a cart and a couple of mules, and hire an Indian to help in the work. Soon his prowess as a hunter became legendary in San Francisco. On the lakes and pools of the San Joaquin River he killed the ducks and wild geese which swarmed there like sparrows; in the great pine forests that covered the slopes of the San Rafael Mountains he brought down elk, deer and roebuck.

But his chosen game was the bear: the silver-tip, the cinnamon bear, the smooth face and, above all, the redoubtable monarch of the American forests, the grizzly, which the Indians and trappers called "Ephraim" and "Joe Moccasin," because his tracks resembled those made by moccasined feet.

In the mountains Ephraim lived in caves strewn with the remains of the animals he had devoured. He passed all winter in a somnolence which did not, however, prevent him from hearing any unwonted noise outside. When a sound aroused him he came out of his

lair swaying like a man half awake. Swinging his heavy head from one side to the other, he would sniff the air, and, when reassured, return to his den to sleep again.

At the first breath of spring, when the snow began to melt and the trees were tipped with green, he would become wide awake and set out on the hunt. Thinner and dulled by his long sleep, in order to quicken his appetite he would pick up the trunks of dead trees, broken down by the winter storms. Small animals like rats and weasles sheltered there, and he would snap them up and devour them as appetizers. Thus, little by little, finding his vigor and suppleness again, he sought larger prey.

When the season of courtship was at hand, the stags would battle in the glades before their amazed females. Old Ephraim would lie in wait, motionless behind a rock, or crouching in the pine needles. When an animal, wounded or ashamed of having been beaten, drew away from the others, the enormous beast, which weighed as much as an ox, would leap forward with the agility of a cat. With

one stroke of the paw he would fell his prey, break its back and, walking upright on his hind legs, hugging his quivering victim against his breast, bring it into his cave to devour it at leisure. Sometimes he gave himself up to the pleasures of fishing; swimming and floundering about in the river beds, he would stun the fish by a blow of his paw with singular adroitness.

In the plains he hibernated in enormous holes which he dug whenever possible near rivers or springs. Hidden among the reeds, he would lie in wait for the animals that came to drink. He also followed the great herds of bison, in order to bound on the stragglers or feed on the carcasses of animals that the herds left in their wake.

Pindray had one alarming encounter with "Ephraim." All day long he had followed a herd of moose-deer, and at nightfall had camped in a valley of pines enclosed by a dense thicket. There he had found a carpet of moss as thick as a mattress and dead branches with which to build a fire. Pindray and the Indian grilled some strips of dried

meat, which they carried attached to their saddles, and fell asleep, rifles at hand, in the great silence of the forest. At dawn they were awakened by the discordant cry of wild fowl. The rising sun tinged the trunks of the pines with red, and in the morning light traces of moose became visible.

The hunter and the Indian took the trail again. Pindray, who was a little ahead, entered the thicket. He had taken a few steps, pushing the branches aside as he went, when a huge form rose up before him. He hardly had time to recognize Ephraim and hear his loud breathing before he was smothered in a terrible embrace.

Thanks to his herculean strength, he was able to seize the ears of the bear and pull aside the menacing jaws that approached to devour him, while the terrible claws tore at his back and the animal's grip grew tighter. This lasted a minute, until the Indian fired point-blank at the back of the grizzly, which released Pindray and turned against his aggressor. A second shot only maddened him, and he ran several yards in the thicket after the Indian,

who fled as fast as his legs could carry him. At last the bear staggered and fell, filling the forest with his roars.

Any other man but Pindray would have succumbed after such an encounter, but the Frenchman only had a violent attack of fever. The Indian rubbed his wounds with the juice of certain plants, and two days later they took the trail again.

When he had killed a certain quantity of game, he would conceal the bodies of the animals in pits, and go to fetch his cart to haul them to the San Francisco market. This he did nearly every week, and usually spent Sunday in the city, where he enjoyed himself without the least restraint. In the saloons he led a rake's life, for which he can be neither praised nor blamed. Then, having saturated himself with the joys that San Francisco offered, he returned with renewed pleasure to the forests.

When winter came and the snow rendered the mountains inaccessible, he was forced to find another outlet for his energy.

In the El Dorado saloon he had met a ranchero who wanted to restock his corrals.

At that time the principal cattle market was held at Los Angeles, which was called the "Queen of Cows," four hundred or so miles south of San Francisco. The trip there could be made by sea, but when coming back, in order to reduce the cost of transportation, the animals had to be driven over the deserts and the mountains, in a country infested by hostile Indians and by desperadoes even worse.

Pindray undertook this dangerous mission with enthusiasm. With several thousand dollars in his pocket, he embarked at San Francisco, and two days later landed at La Trinidad, a few miles from Los Angeles.

San Francisco appeared like a penitentiary in comparison with Los Angeles. With its delightful climate, tropical vegetation and profusion of the most beautiful flowers in the world, the southern city was the earthly paradise of America.

The gold fever had not yet spread to the city, as the cattle trade sufficed to make it rich, and people were much too happy to leave their pleasant existence and run after chimerical fortunes elsewhere.

But this paradise on earth had its Yoshiwara, and the name of "Niger Alley" was known from Washington to New Orleans. It was a promenade planted with palms, on each side of which were saloons and houses of ill fame, filled with European women, negresses and Mexicans, whom the traffickers in human flesh bought from the Indians after their raids.

Pindray stayed too long in these haunts, since he spent or lost in gambling most of the funds entrusted to him by the ranchero. Plunged into perplexity, he had begun to consider the most radical and painful solution, when his good luck again came to his aid in a quite unexpected manner.

For some time the rancheros of Los Angeles had been at their wits' ends. Their corrals had been devastated; ranches had been burned and their owners submitted to all sorts of torture because they refused to declare where their gold was hidden; some women had been carried off and others made to undergo disgusting brutalities.

The Indians, who were usually the authors

of such misdeeds, were not, however, guilty in these cases. The crimes were the work of a white man and an Indian half-breed. The white man was a Mexican desperado named Joachim Muretta. The half-breed bore the nickname of Three Fingers, because he had lost, in some battle or accident, two fingers of his right hand.

These bandits, who terrorized the country, held the mountain passes, where they robbed and murdered travelers, and eluded capture, thanks to the complicity of the Indians and the fear they inspired.

In vain had the vigilance committee put a price on their heads: ten thousand dollars was an attractive prize, but no one cared to risk his life in such a game.

Pindray had often risked his for nothing. In his present predicament, indeed, he valued it less than ever, since he was considering very seriously putting an end to it. On the other hand, with ten thousand dollars he would have every reason to wish to live, and he resolved to try to win the promised reward.

It was hopeless to think of surprising

Muretta and Three Fingers in their hiding-place, as they had none—or too many of them, which amounted to the same thing—and their field of operation was of very considerable extent. The only possible plan was to draw them into a trap by the bait of a living prey in the form of a traveler laden with gold. Certain that Muretta had acquaintances in all the low quarters of Los Angeles, Pindray set to work to let the news leak out, as though inadvertently, that he was about to start for San Francisco with a herd of cattle and a belt full of gold. He did not conceal the fact that he intended to take the Santa Fé trail, which passes through the cañons of the Colorado, and so shorten his route by several miles.

He engaged two cowboys to help him drive several oxen that he had been able to buy, and went ahead of them on the road.

The second day of the journey he was riding in the cañon of Umqua when a bullet whizzed by his ears. He immediately sank down, groaning, and feigned death. A few moments later Joachim Muretta and Three Fingers appeared and drew near, intending to finish him

off and rob him. At that moment Pindray seized his carbine, which had never missed its man, and with two shots brought the bandits down.

Without troubling to make sure that they were dead, he cut off their heads, put them in a sack and took them to the Vigilance Committee of Los Angeles. The heads were exhibited for several months, enclosed in glass jars in a drug store.

Having received the prize of ten thousand dollars, he made up the herd of cattle and rejoined his cowboys. Six weeks later he reached San Francisco and drove the animals into the corral of the ranchero.

With the money earned from this expedition, he made other more costly ones into the saloons of San Francisco, where he had become a sort of legendary figure.

It was at this point that Gaston saw him in the "Polka," in the midst of his knife duel with an American miner who had asserted that it was not Pindray who had killed Muretta and Three Fingers.

From that moment an unusual feeling

sprang up between the two men. Several bonds drew them together: they were of the same race, of similar breeding and they had the same passion for adventures. In other circumstances they might have attracted each other, but jealousy seems to have found a way into their relations.

Pindray was not susceptible to this sentiment. He was too much of an egoist, too absorbed in his own personality, to trouble about any one else. He loved life and lived simply, without the least sentimentality of any sort. Gaston was more complicated. Although under the fascination of his compatriot's personality, he was irritated by and jealous of Pindray's local renown, a shabby enough sentiment not worthy of the man.

In France the two men lived in circles so far apart that they had never met, and if they had come in contact, they would certainly never have been drawn toward each other. At San Francisco these differences were broken down.

Gaston was an intellectual lost in adventure, for which Pindray had been so magnificently endowed by nature. The

latter's physical attractiveness, his strength and self-command were of the greatest advantage to him in his new life.

Gaston was less favored. Handsome also, with the beauty of a romantic poet, accentuated by a heavy Celtic mustache, eloquent but often sarcastic or carried away by anger, and sometimes, in his fits of blackness, drawing into himself like Achilles sulking in his tent, he had not the natural authority that dominates lawless men and forces them, despite themselves, to obedience. His energy of intellect had not yet found the occasion to manifest itself, and the exploits which were dinned into his ears were not in his province. He made the mistake of growing exasperated, and several set-backs which he experienced only made him more bitter.

An American company built a wharf in the port to facilitate the landing of merchandise, and from that moment his own disembarkation enterprise had no more reason to exist. He had, therefore, to find another source of livelihood, or else become a waiter, a bootblack or a dishwasher.

Gaston reflected that he was as good a shot as Pindray, and in order not to encroach on his friend's hunting grounds he allotted himself the Coast Range forests the other side of the bay of San Francisco. Here, however, Gaston failed to find the big game that his rival brought to market. As if deliberately, elk and bear never came within reach of his gun. The fact is, he was only a sportsman, whereas Pindray was a backwoodsman.

So he had deceived himself again and gained only a new wound to his pride. To console himself, Gaston gave out that Pindray did not himself track down the gray bears he brought to the San Francisco market, but that he bought them from cowboys who captured them with the lasso in the plains of the San Joachim, and that he shot them afterward.

The approach of winter cut off hunting as a means of subsistence. Then, as if chance took pleasure in setting him in the footsteps of his rival, Gaston heard in the "French Refuge" the story of a cowboy who had just returned from southern California, and who reported that oxen could be bought at Los Angeles for

twenty-five dollars, while they cost more than a hundred in San Francisco.

Gaston immediately conceived the simple and profitable idea of buying a drove of the animals at Los Angeles and bringing them to San Francisco to sell. When all costs were defrayed, the enterprise should still leave a decidedly attractive margin of profit. To put the plan into execution, he got the help once more of his friend Pigné-Dupuytren. Hubert Sanders, the restaurant keeper and money-lender, who was on the way to making a large fortune, advanced them the necessary funds.

At Los Angeles they bought a drove of five hundred head of cattle and returned driving the animals before them across the deserts.

On this trip Gaston lived some of the most agreeable moments of his life.

“As far as the eye could reach across the savannah, the wild oats undulated like a sea. At long intervals appeared clusters of venerable trees of enormous proportions. The feet of the mules stirred up hares, partridges and grouse. Now and again we killed a calf and the air was so pure that the pieces we fastened

to the saddles of our horses dried without becoming tainted.

“At night we camped around great fires, and each in turn kept watch for two hours against Indians and the bears of the sierra. Sometimes the half-wild cattle would stampede, or, frightened by some animal, split up, and it would take several hours riding to get the drove together again.”

Unfortunately, when he arrived at San Francisco the oxen were only worth twenty-five dollars a head, as the Americans had imported great numbers during his absence. In the hope of a better price Gaston went on up the coast as far as the town of Sackton, in Oregon, and there finally sold his cattle at a price that hardly covered his expenses.

On returning to San Francisco in April, he learned that Pindray had just left for Sonora, on the Mexican frontier.

CHAPTER IV

ON "BLOODY GROUND"

SONORA is a large state in the northwest of Mexico, situated between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Gulf of California. In this region tradition places the gold and silver roofed palaces of the Aztecs.

In the valleys watered by the Rio Gila and the Rio San Pedro, barley, sugar cane, grapevines and orange trees grew in profusion, while the gold and silver mines in the mountains were reported to be richer than those of California. But they were guarded like the Garden of the Hesperides by the Apache Indians who peopled this territory.

Under the dominion of Spain, the mines of Ajo, La Plancha and Arizona, which had been worked only in the most perfunctory manner, had nevertheless given considerable results.

Since the Revolution which resulted in the establishment of the Mexican Republic, they had been completely abandoned. The *presidios* that had been built to hold garrisons to protect the miners against the Indians fell into ruin, and the Apaches had become the formidable masters of the district.

The Apaches were divided into two principal tribes, the Coyoteros and the Navajos.

The Coyoteros were the more savage. Essentially warlike, they lived by pillage and hunting. Their dwellings were earth lodges called "hogans," or tents made of bison skins, daubed with figures of animals. In these lived the women, children and old men, for the warriors were always on the hunt or the war-path. Divided into clans of about two hundred men, they communicated by means of fires lighted on the mountains, and their operations were conducted with rigorous discipline. Rarely attacking in the open, they would creep around the coveted prey, village, rancho or convoy, and lie in wait several days and nights, patient as wolves. When the

moment came they bounded forth, setting up their terrible war-whoop, which made even the horses tremble. Then they devastated, pillaged, massacred and tortured with incredible ferocity. Their arms were bows. The points of the arrows, tied on with strands of grass, became detached by the flow of blood and remained in the victim's wound; often they were poisoned. They had also a few guns which the American traders sold them, and it was said that the Indians loaded them with the little fragments of silver they found in the mines.

They went quite naked, rubbed their bodies with oil, were beardless and wore their hair on the crown of the head, tied by a band of red cloth surmounted by an eagle's feather. They rode thin, tireless horses which they trained like dogs. For saddle they used a truss of straw attached by cords serving as a belly-band, and a bridle with a piece of wood for a bit. From the saddle bow hung the hair of vanquished enemies, whom they scalped alive by twisting the bow string rapidly around the head.

The country which they had devastated was called "Bloody Ground."

The Navajos were less savage. Certain indications have led some imaginative theorists to support the idea that, instead of belonging, like the other savages of America, to the ancient Athapascan race, they were the descendants of a tribe of the Jews—perhaps one of the lost tribes of Israel—which had emigrated at some uncertain date! The fact remains that they were of a type singularly different from the other Apaches.

Shorter, fatter, and of less powerful build, they were of milder character, living in their wigwams in patriarchal fashion.

Their women, unlike those of their neighbors, the Coyoteros, were not slaves, but played an important rôle in the tribe as counselors of the men. Their marriage resembled that of civilized peoples. They admitted divorce by mutual consent for incompatibility of temperament, sanctioned by the council of the sachems of the tribe. Divorced women had a right to half the household possessions. A trait claimed to support

the ingenious theory of the Jewish origin of the Navajos was their dislike for pork.

Their religion, a kind of mystic paganism, was somewhat like that of the Hindus; they believed in a spirit which was the creator of a first man and woman who were still living. Their principal goddess was Esthenatah (the woman who renews herself, grows old, dies and is reborn), evidently symbolical of nature. They worshiped also the sun, the moon and spirits hidden in the bodies of animals. They did not make human sacrifices, but offered to their gods cereals and painted cigarettes rubbed with pollen.

The sick and the dying were carried in processions, accompanied by song and dance, to the huts of the medicine men, who applied a sort of powdered ochre to the bodies and drew magic circles and symbols of gods. The supporters of the "Lost Tribe" hypothesis maintain that their religious chants strongly recalled the Hebrew melodies, and that a word resembling "Hallelujah" occurred in them frequently. The warriors of the tribe were not naked, but wore short leather breeches, on

which were painted emblems and designs; woolen stockings, leggings and sandals. For head-dress they wore a sort of leather hat ornamented with feathers, very much like an Assyrian helmet. Their bows and shields were strikingly similar to those of the Amalekite warriors. They did not scalp their victims and rarely tortured them. The main object of their raids was to carry off women and girls, whom they sold to the Mexican traffickers in white flesh.

Cochise, their great chief, was reputed to be more than a hundred years old. Over all the Apache tribes in Sonora he exercised undisputed dominion by reason of his wisdom, firmness, spirit of justice and loyalty to his word. During the conquest of Mexico he had fought the Americans with ferocity but with honor. He by no means detested the white men, and it was even reported that he had married a young Mexican girl whom he had carried off. He spoke Spanish fluently and some English. The other Apache chiefs—three herculean and wily bandits—were named Mangus Colorado, Ponce and Del Gadito.

Other Indian tribes, the Yumas and the Papagoes, who cultivated the soil, lived in the plains and valleys of the Rio Gila. Although less warlike than the Apaches, they were nevertheless troublesome neighbors, and stole horses, oxen and occasionally women.

The Mexican Government was totally incapable of protecting Sonora against the Apaches. Knowing that at San Francisco there was a large number of adventurers and discouraged miners at the end of their resources, the government instructed its consul, Del Valle, to examine the possibility of forming with some of these desperadoes an expeditionary force capable of combatting the savages of Bloody Ground and opening up the mines again. It promised the adventurers an agricultural settlement at Cocóspera, in the valley of the Rio San Miguel, and undertook to provide them with the means of subsistence until their colony became self-supporting.

Dillon, the French Consul, readily agreed to help in enrolling the band, which would rid him of a number of penurious Frenchmen

stranded in San Francisco. He also saw the dawning of a certain great project that he already had nursed for some time.

Gaston at that moment was in Southern California and Dillon had no means of communicating with him rapidly. Moreover, he considered Pindray better fitted to command an expedition that he looked upon as an advance guard. After Pindray had shown the possibility of establishing himself in Sonora and had examined the ground, there would be time to organize a more ambitious undertaking with the help of a man of greater capacity.

Pindray accepted the French Consul's offer with enthusiasm. He had begun to weary of San Francisco, which was fast becoming more and more Americanized, and already resembled other big cities. He certainly had not renounced Paris to fall into another strait-laced community.

In a saloon kept by a certain Paul Niquet, where all the French ne'er-do-wells congregated, he lost no time in recruiting a hundred adventurers of the first water. Most of them were French, though there were also several

Germans, Swedes and South Americans. His lieutenant was De la Chapelle, brother of a friend of Gaston who managed a newspaper, *Le Messager de San-Francisco*.

The Mexican Government had placed at Pindray's disposal a sum of ten thousand dollars. The little expedition embarked on February 20, 1850, on the *Cumberland*, and landed in Mexico, at the port of Guaymas, fifteen days later. The town was in the grip of an attack of yellow fever. Pindray stayed there only long enough to confer with General Blanco, Governor of Sonora, and then the little column advanced up country.

Attached to the expedition was a guide who went by the name of Bob Will. He was an old trapper who for twenty years had wandered in Mexico, from Vera Cruz to the American frontier, selling furs and conducting caravans of emigrants on the Santa Fé trail. Sometimes he gave out that he had been a Methodist preacher in Missouri. At this date he was fifty years of age. Tall, thin, with a long wrinkled face burned by the sun, he rode a little pony as thin as its master. He

used a Mexican saddle, and his feet were thrust into inordinately long stirrups which nearly touched the ground. At his side trotted a large, fleshless animal, more wolf than dog.

His leather jacket, breeches and leggings were so rubbed by use that they had become earth-colored. He wore like a bandoleer a leather belt containing pockets in which were a powder-horn, a shot mold, bodkins, a "pull-through" for cleaning his gun and an antelope horn containing bait for his traps. His gun, hanging across the saddle, was always within reach of his hand. He hardly ever opened his lips and when he did speak his voice was so low that it was difficult to understand him. He was so accustomed to looking to right and left as he went along the trail that his eyes were never still. His rifle was remorseless, for he fired only when he was sure of hitting his mark. The other trappers looked upon him as a master.

Bob rode at the head of the column with Pindray. The first part of the route was delightful. The Yumas who held the country were at peace, and their territory was safe for

travelers. The march of the little band was an excursion rather than an expedition.

On arriving on Bloody Ground all this changed. War began to show its tragic face in the ruined houses, the devastated fields and the graves that dotted the route. They entered a deserted region, parched by the sun—a land of rocks and deserts of sand. Progress became difficult and wearisome, and soon thirst tormented the men—thirst more terrible than hunger, thirst that brings fever and sends men mad.

Pindray directed the column with his customary energy, encouraging some and threatening the loiterers. The heat had become intolerable; the sky was a sinister yellow, and the wind which began to blow raised clouds of dust. When night fell a storm broke, and the deluges of rain battered down the tents. Toward ten o'clock the storm died down.

According to his custom, Pindray smoked his pipe, plunged in reflection. Beside him in the tent were Bob Will and his dog. About midnight Bob went out to look at the night;

then he returned and made a sign to Pindray, who joined him outside. Pointing to the fires on the neighboring hills, he uttered one word: "Coyoteros."

Pindray aroused the company, but the night passed without incident. At daybreak the rain had settled the dust, and the column continued its march. But soon the sun rose in the sky and the wind again began to raise thick clouds of dust that so blinded the men they could not distinguish their comrades.

Suddenly frightful, inhuman cries, like the howling of wolves, burst on their ears; they were the war whoops of the Apaches. Pindray made an effort to stop the column and form it into a hollow square; but it was too late. After a volley of arrows and several shots, which wounded two men, the Indians, brandishing their tomahawks, threw themselves on the little band. In the white night of the dust clouds there followed a terrible hand-to-hand struggle, accompanied by the horrible war whoop.

Pindray was attacked by a giant besmeared with ochre and vermilion, who threw himself

on him with upraised knife. With a twist of the hand Pindray knocked aside the Indian's wrist and drew a revolver from his pocket, but the Apache tripped him up and flung himself upon the white man as he fell to the ground. Then, kneeling upon his chest, he seized him by the throat with one hand and with the other raised his knife. Pindray would have been lost if the Apache had not yielded to the temptation of torturing his victim before despatching him. This delay gave Pindray his chance, and, mustering his strength, he made a violent movement which took his enemy by surprise and forced him to loosen his grip. Pindray was able to seize his assailant's hand with his teeth and bite through one of his fingers, compelling the savage to lower his knife; then he gave a side lurch and the weapon dropped to the ground. From that moment he was saved. By a sudden recovery he seized the Apache, threw him back and blew out his brains.

He must have killed one of the chiefs of the tribe, for, according to their custom, the others immediately fled. The next day the column arrived at Cocóspera without further incident.

The settlement at Cocóspera was an old rancho, abandoned by its owners, situated in the cool valley of the Rio San Miguel, at the foot of the Sierra de Antunez, near the fortified pueblo of Rayon, where the inhabitants of the neighboring farms had taken refuge to protect themselves against the Indians.

The rancho had been sacked and burned. On their arrival, Pindray and his men were disagreeably surprised to find only one shed still standing, and their disappointment can be imagined. Pindray had tents put up and organized a camp intrenched behind a stockade.

The valley was as fertile as could be wished, and anything could be grown there with but little effort. But in order to begin cultivation it would have been necessary to leave the camp, and to leave the camp was perilous. Night and day the Apaches prowled around the settlement like wolves. During the night their nerve-racking war cry could be heard, and in the daytime they shot arrows into the camp. One man who strayed outside the settlement at night disappeared, and the next

day the Apaches threw his dead body, scalped and dismembered, over the stockade. Under such conditions it was useless to think of cultivating the domain and still less of moving on to the mountains to reach the mines.

To complete their troubles, it was very difficult to obtain provisions. At the pueblo of Rayon the alcade found every possible excuse for not delivering the supplies promised by the Mexican Government. The tradespeople of the village regarded the men of the company with as much distrust as they did the Apaches, and Pindray several times had to threaten them with his revolver to make them part with their goods. Even then he had to pay three times as much as the Mexicans. It became necessary to send convoys for supplies as far as Arispe, and twice these expeditions were attacked.

The men began to complain and ask what they had come to Cocóspera for. In the company were several rough customers, notably four individuals named David One-Eye, Tom Short, Billy Cutbent and Willy Red, who were not at all reassuring messmates, and whom the

company held in considerable awe. Pindray recognized the danger of leaving men of this type inactive and decided to begin operations.

The account of his first victory, in a despatch to General Blanco, reads as follows:

"Excellency: I beg to inform you that yesterday we captured twenty-two horses from a band of fifty Apaches. I learned about mid-day that they were roaming around our camp and about one o'clock we fell upon them unexpectedly. They were driving before them a number of stolen horses. Our pursuit was so rapid that the Indians barely had time to escape, killing their wounded so they would not fall into our hands alive. Our party was very small and almost entirely on foot. The animals captured are mares which have been broken in; they must come from a long distance away, for no Mexican at Rayon recognizes their brands. We are keeping them at the camp until Your Excellency decides what is to be done with them, for we have no cavalry to look after them nor money to have them kept by the peons. If Your Excellency condescends to help our settlement

by leaving this prize of war at our disposal, we shall be greatly obliged. We make this request especially because we hope to use the horses in an offensive against our dangerous enemies. I am, etc. . . . Charles de Pindray."

This letter, which reveals a diplomatic tact unexpected in a man of his stamp, shows that Pindray was clever in adapting himself to circumstances. But the Apaches made him pay dear for his success.

The following week two men were captured and tortured in full view of the camp. The situation grew worse from day to day, and Pindray hardly knew which way to turn, when he received a visit from a Mexican trapper named Carso who was in communication with Cochise, the great chief of the Apaches.

As a child Carso had been taken prisoner by the Navajos. He was subsequently ransomed, and for some unknown reason the savages had conceived a liking for him. He acted as a sort of envoy between their tribes and General Blanco.

Carso told Pindray that Cochise was at the

moment in the neighborhood of Cocóspera in a defile of the Sierra de Antunez called the Apaches' Pass. He declared that the old chief would be glad to receive a visit from Pindray and would perhaps make some sort of agreement with him. The Indian's known loyalty to his word constituted a guarantee. In any case, the situation was such that it was well worth-while running the risk, and Pindray asked for an interview with Cochise, who granted the request. Accompanied by Corso and De la Chapelle, he went to the Apaches' Pass.

The defile was guarded by invisible sentinels, whose calls they heard all along the trail. A few yards from the entrance to the pass, the old chief was seated in a hut on a carpet of bison skins. He had truly an impressive appearance. The old man was about six feet tall, had the eyes of an eagle and large, clear-cut features. He was dressed in his war costume, his body covered with vermillion and ochre, and his head decked with feathers. He embraced Corso and motioned Pindray to sit down beside him on the bison skins; then he

passed the pipe of peace, from which Pindray took a few whiffs, and after that they talked.

Cochise began by declaring that in taking supreme command of the Apaches he had sworn to his people to drive out the white men and to take a hundred scalps for every Apache killed. He asked what the white men had come into his country for and why they sought the "yellow iron" with which they could neither clothe nor feed themselves.

Pindray explained that each people had its own customs and that in the lands of the white men gold was used to buy food and raiment.

Cochise replied that this was very possible, but that he could not authorize a body of white men to penetrate the territory of his people. Several years before, relying upon a pact, he had allowed an American company to establish itself in the mountains to work the mines, and a great deal of trouble had resulted. The entire population of a tribe which had hindered the miners in their work had been poisoned.

He added, however, that after a council of war with the other Apache chiefs, Ponce, Del

Gadito and Mangus Colorado, it had been decided that if the white men consented to pay to the Coyoteros and Navajos on the last day of each moon a tribute of grain, blankets, tobacco and pulque, they could remain at Cocóspera; if they refused they would be slaughtered to the last man. That was his ultimatum.

Pindray was strongly disposed to blow out the old chief's brains, but he reflected that such an act would be fatal, and so he simply answered that he would tell his men of the proposals and return in a few days to give a reply.

Then Cochise presented him with a belt of wampum as a sign of truce and went off with a dignity that even Louis XIV would not have disclaimed.

Pindray returned to Cocóspera in a state of perplexity which may well be imagined. Should he tell his men that they would have to give up the idea of exploiting the El Dorado for which they had already undergone so much? Or tell them that all they could look forward to was to work the mines on condition that they paid tribute to the Indians?

Pindray feared the effect of such a cold shower on the heads of his over-excited followers, and thought it wiser to play for time.

That evening he went to ask the advice of his friend, Peter Kitchen, at the Poteria rancho, two miles from Coscóspera.

The rancho was a long, single-storied adobe house surrounded by a wooden balcony, with a roof covered by a coat of moss to keep off the sun. Around the building were about a hundred acres of cultivated fields and prairies full of horses and cattle. Peter Kitchen had six hundred pigs, and sold ten tons of ham and bacon every year at Arispe. In the enclosure of the rancho there were a blacksmith, a saddler and a baker—in short, a whole miniature village. The domain was shut in by a stockade pierced by loopholes; day and night sentinels kept guard and Peter Kitchen slept always with one eye open.

Kitchen was a Dutchman about fifty years old, short, thick-set, with a calm but extremely energetic bearing. He had been established at Poteria for twenty years. His son had been killed by the Apaches and he had sworn to

avenge him by taking three hundred scalps. At this time he already counted two hundred. With him lived his daughter, Elsa, a girl about eighteen years of age. An expert house-keeper, she excelled especially in pastry making. She went about her work with a revolver thrust in her belt, and never left the house without a gun in her hand. In the evening this tall, blonde, laughing girl, looking like a Valkyrie, sat down at the piano and sang Dutch songs, while awaiting the attack of the savages.

The domestics of the rancho were the cowboys and the peons. The former spent the day on the prairie with the cattle; in the evening they returned to the rancho, and slept, fully dressed, on the floor of a shed, using their saddles for pillows. They were tall, wild young fellows, capable of the best and the worst, equipped with the classic cowboy outfit of red silk handkerchiefs, sombreros, leather breeches and lassos.

The peons were a mixture of Indian and Mexican blood, and, in Sonora, numbered about a hundred thousand. The Mexican Re-

public prohibited slavery, but had invented "peonage." The peons, who were supposed to be hired by the rancheros, were in reality bought by them. On entering the service of their masters they were given a fairly large sum, which they immediately spent, and the law obliged them, until they had repaid the amount, to remain under the absolute control of the rancheros, to whom even their lives belonged.

Pindray liked Peter Kitchen, Elsa and the Poteria very much. Among these kindly folk he relaxed and seemed to find a home again, and often he went to pass the evening with them. The excursion, however, was not without danger. The route was for the most part through open country, lighted by the stars of the southern constellations. There an ambush was hardly to be feared, but farther on he had to go about five hundred yards through a little wood of cork trees and cactus, where peril stalked.

On these trips Pindray found a curious protector in the shape of a cat that Elsa Kitchen had given him. The little animal was singu-



Mexican Women Making Tortillas

larly sensitive to the odor of the Apaches. Trotting along beside his horse like a dog, she could smell the Indians half a mile away and would start trembling and meowing. Thus warned, Pindray would take her in the saddle, and, lying flat against the neck of his mount, he would gallop along at top speed, trusting to Providence to protect him. Arrows and bullets sometimes whizzed by his ears, but he never was wounded.

That night going back to Cocóspera he became unusually melancholy. Riding in the moonlight that flooded the plains and the somber line of the mountains, he saw again all his past up to the moment of his departure for America. Never before had the memory of these scenes come to his mind. He felt profoundly weary of his wandering life and wondered when he would again find peace of mind and a home where he could sit down and not ask himself where he would be next day.

A flight of arrows aroused him from his reverie. The cat at his side began to meow; taking it in the saddle he spurred his horse to a gallop.

At Cocóspera his lieutenant, De la Chapelle, awaited him with bad news. By some means or other the men had heard of Cochise's ultimatum, and they were in a state of high excitement.

During the day, several men had deserted with the intention of recrossing the American frontier, and pushing on to Tucson, the meeting place of the bandits of the plains, who were as dangerous as the Apaches. The remainder of the band, under the leadership of David One-Eye, were gathered together in the shed, and, revolvers in hand, awaited the return of their commander. On arriving, Pindray immediately went to the shed, unarmed and with a smile on his lips. David One-Eye, acting as spokesman for the party, said they wanted to return to San Francisco, and demanded the necessary funds. Pindray promised them the money, feeling sure that Peter Kitchen would lend it to him. When order had been restored, he went to sleep in his hammock, his revolver by his side.

Next morning De la Chapelle entered

Pindray's tent and found him dead, with a bullet through his head.

It is highly improbable that such a man as Pindray would commit suicide, especially at such a critical moment, when his little band had most need of him. Perhaps he was killed by one of his own desperadoes or perhaps by some cowboy lover of Elsa Kitchen, seized with a fit of jealousy on seeing him return from Poteria.

No inquiry was made; anything of the kind would, indeed, have been useless. The curé of Rayon refused to hold a burial service. Pindray's remains were interred in a pit, which was afterward filled up with stones to prevent the wolves from digging up the body. Next Sunday the padre, from the pulpit, thanked God for having delivered the country from such a miscreant and forbade his parishioners to go near the grave.

Had Pindray at last found "peace of mind"?

CHAPTER V

GREAT HOPES

THE news of Pindray's death affected Gaston deeply. He wrote several pages, unfortunately lost, in which he did justice to his rival, which is more than he ever did during Pindray's lifetime. Perhaps deep within him he felt somewhat relieved that his rival was out of the way, for henceforth he was indisputably at the head of the French colony at San Francisco.

But this is only surmise. Certainly the death of Pindray stirred in him ambitious projects. All his life he had been spurred by a desire to do something great. Now, he thought, the moment to act had come and he did not want to let it pass. Mexico was then in the throes of one of the greatest crises of its history. Without exaggeration, it can be

said that the country was in a state of decomposition. After the stultifying domination of the Spanish clergy, the Republican government came into power, but was hardly any better. It seemed that the Mexicans had passed to Scylla from Charybdis.

A band of politicians and financiers replaced the priests in authority, and wrung every cent from the people. Powerless and discouraged, the populace became indifferent and gave up all work, since their labors enriched only their oppressors. Industry was practically non-existent, while the peasants cultivated only enough soil to supply their own needs. Immense tracts of country were left to lie fallow; customs tariffs and transport difficulties made the distribution of supplies practically impossible, and whole provinces were devastated by famine. Distress prevailed everywhere.

Mexico was ripe for annexation, and already the Great Powers had stretched forth their hands.

By the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty the United States had shorn Mexico of California

and part of Sonora. Now it only waited for a chance to take the rest. Meantime, according to their custom, foreign bankers began the economic penetration which precedes territorial conquest. The United States made short loans to the Mexican Government, on the security of the state monopolies, and, as the Mexicans could never pay the interest on the loans, the Americans seized the guarantees, which were the customs, salt and tobacco duties—and, in short, controlled practically the whole of the economic life of the country.

Great Britain also had a finger in the pie. British banks and commercial firms got a foothold in Mexico City, and British men-of-war cruised about outside the ports.

Gaston thought the moment had come to stake a claim for France, and he certainly was well placed for the undertaking.

He knew that the Mexican people were in need of help, and that they would welcome it from any quarter. They detested the Americans and hardly liked the English any better. The Catholic clergy fulminated against these heretical nations. From the pulpit the village

curés told their flocks that these peoples were nothing but devils who hid their horns under their hats and wore gloves only to conceal the fact that their hands had talons instead of fingers. The French Catholics were looked on with more favor, although their revolutionary spirit was suspected.

In the disordered condition of Mexico, the French colony there became of more consequence. It met with a good deal of public sympathy, and as it was an element of order some thought there was a possibility that it might one day become capable of supplanting the government that was so heartily detested by the people.

Gaston's ardent imagination had already begun to fashion a plan of enchanting possibilities. Pindray had served as a pioneer to show him the path, and Gaston resolved to take up the work that had been little more than outlined. Patrice Dillon, the French Consul at San Francisco, warmly encouraged him, perhaps even a little too enthusiastically. Both, however, carefully concealed their projects, for they knew that the American

Government would never permit any stroke against the prey that it coveted itself.

Gaston gave out that he only intended to continue the undertaking begun by Pindray. A little colony like that at Cocóspera was necessarily powerless; his plan, he announced, was to establish in Sonora a sort of military, agricultural and industrial company, able to cope with the Apaches and to make the mines accessible. These would be worked on the understanding that a part of the profits was to be paid to the government of Mexico.

The first step was to obtain the Mexican Government's agreement to the project. With the help of Dillon, Gaston secured the necessary funds, and on May 25, 1852, left for Mexico City.

On June third he disembarked at San Biaz, slept at the Casa de las Diligencias and next morning took the coach for the capital.

The journey, which took three days, was through the most varied country; forests, plains and mountains succeeded one another in the dust and heat. The heavy coach was drawn

by six mules. The *mayoral*, or conductor, rode one of the wheel animals, while a bedraggled mozo played the rôle of postillion on one of the leaders. Along the sandy, deeply-rutted track, which could hardly be called a road, the coach rolled, pitched and groaned its way, threatening every moment to come unhitched. The inns were disgusting and the food, which was sold at scandalous prices, was nauseous. The whitewashed, cobble-stoned rooms of the inns were furnished with a camp bed and a mattress, and a rickety bench on which swayed a cracked earthen bowl and a pitcher half full of muddy water. The mattress was so alive with vermin that sleep was hopeless; it was better to sit on the bench and smoke.

At three o'clock the coach was due to start again. And then the enchantment began. First, there was a breakfast of delicious chocolate and golden tortillas in the kitchen; then came the ride in the freshness of the early morning. This journey gave Gaston his first contact with Mexico, and the landscape and people of the countryside as he saw them from the coach, filled him with interest.

Beneath the trees horsemen were still asleep, using their saddles for pillows and holding the bridles of their horses in their hands. Monks wearing Basilian hats jogged along on mules. Women on horseback, wrapped in large serapes and enveloped in vividly colored silk handkerchiefs concealing everything but their eyes, and others in coaches escorted by armed horsemen, passed by at full gallop. On magnificent ponies with silver trappings rode the rich Mexicans, with silver-laced sombreros, ornamented with golden tassels. They wore velvet jackets fastened by red silken cords, with a hunting knife in their belts, while their legs were clothed in calzoneras, with silver buttons at the knee, and leather gaiters covering the calf and foot down to the instep. From their shoulders hung their serapes.

Before crossing the Azote forest, the *mayoral* got down from his mule and warned the passengers that the coach probably would be attacked by brigands. They had, indeed, already been told this at the previous stopping place, and advised not to try to resist.

The formalities of the brigands were almost invariable. The chief of the band—whom, incidentally, the *mayoral* addressed as “compadre”—would open the coach door in the politest possible fashion and request the passengers to get out, undress and leave their clothing on the roadside. Then the brigands began their operations.

When they had finished, they would allow the passengers to get into the coach again, but the brigands kept their clothes. Before arriving at the next stop, the *mayoral* would ring a bell and the servants of the village inn would come running with sheets, in which the luckless travelers would clothe themselves before entering the village. An English lady, who became accustomed to these adventures, dressed herself as a precaution in a pajama suit made of paper.

Gaston was fortunate enough to escape this little formality, and reached Mexico City fully clothed and still in possession of the money he carried in his belt.

He put up at the *Mason de Vergara*, which was the best hotel in the city. It was an old

palace of a single story, in which the rooms, paved with marble, gave on to a cloister and a flower-decked patio. When he was rested, Gaston called on the French Consul, Levasseur, who received him very cordially and arranged for him an interview with President Arista for the next day.

Gaston spent that evening on the terrace of a café in the Plaza Mayor, enjoying the soft Mexican night tempered by the cool breezes from the snow-capped summit of the Popocatepetl, whose whiteness shone on the luminous horizon. Half-clothed Indian girls sold fruit and ices, while in a shady lane of plane-trees lovers wandered. The girls wore short skirts and went bare-kneed; their heads were enveloped in the rebozo, resembling a nun's veil. The young men wore the usual horseman's clothes. The lover's lane was called ironically the Promenade de las Cadenas. Other couples, less platonic, sought the darkness of the benches arranged around marble columns, which still bore symbolically the serpent of the Aztecs.

Next morning, Gaston had his first inter-

view with President Arista. Worthless as a soldier, crafty and characterless as a man, Arista had only one definite end in view—that of making money before being thrown out by the next and imminent *pronunciamiento*.

Gaston gave him the customary bribe, and Arista sent him to the famous banker, Jecker, who, seven years later, was to suggest to Napoleon III the Mexican expedition, which was nothing more than a repetition of Gaston's undertaking. In a few days Jecker had arranged the affair.

The Mexican Government put at Gaston's disposal the sum of sixty thousand piasters and assured him not only of its consent to his project, but also of its willingness to help in the upkeep of a body of two hundred men in Sonora. From that moment the *Restauradora* company came into existence, and Gaston wrote to a friend:

“When you get this letter I shall have left California with two hundred disciplined and organized men. Toward the end of the month we shall set foot in the promised land and thirty-five days later we shall be at the foot of

the mountains where the gold mines are located. My expedition is supported by powerful capitalists, by the government and by popular sentiment throughout Mexico. Property in half the lands, mines and placers where I plant my flag is secured to me and my companions by title-deeds. The extent of these concessions is unlimited and will be bounded only by the progress of my company. The die is now cast. If I succeed I can hope for fortune and fame. If I fail I shall at least end by a catastrophe worthy of me."

The little band, which he recruited easily enough at San Francisco, was made up of men of a better type than those chosen by Pindray, and was organized like a miniature army. It was composed of one hundred and sixty infantrymen, forty cavalry, two cannon and three officers. Gaston sketched the portraits of his officers in a letter to an acquaintance:

"Lenoir is a man of fine type. He is a former cavalry officer of great merit and proved courage, but ruined by misfortune and drink, which in some degree paralyzes his will. Fayolle, full of enthusiasm, imagination and

temperament, has been a captain of zouaves, man about town in Paris, provincial actor, second-hand dealer and flower-seller. Garnier, a handsome young fellow, and formerly a man of the world, used to hunt with me around San Francisco, and was afterward by turn brick-maker, coal-man and woodcutter. Taillandier is an ex-adjutant, good-natured and still stylish—a true child of Paris. . . .”

Gaston and his men embarked on April ninth on the *Archibald Grazie*, which belonged to the Mexican navy, and the vessel set sail at ten o'clock at night, at high tide.

But the departure of the *Archibald Grazie* was not to take place without incident. It seems as though Destiny found delight in hindering everything that Gaston undertook throughout his life.

As the vessel of the new Argonauts was about to pass the Golden Gate it was stopped by an American brig of war which had been cruising in the bay. The American captain ordered Gaston to come aboard his ship or return to land immediately. Notwithstanding

the fact that the brig was armed with twelve cannon, Gaston wanted to proceed and, if necessary, do battle with the two cannon of the *Archibald Grazie*. His friend Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren, however, persuaded him against such a step, and Gaston got in a skiff and went back to San Francisco.

When he landed it was midnight. He went immediately to the French Consulate, awoke Dillon and told him his story and declared that if the American commander would not let his ship pass he was determined to force his way out of the channel. Dillon's diplomatic soul shuddered at Gaston's words. The Consul explained the very serious consequences of such folly, asked him to do nothing in the matter, and even threatened to keep him prisoner at the Consulate. At last he managed to pacify Gaston by consenting to go with him to see the American Consul, Kirn. It was two A. M. Kirn got out of bed in the worst possible mood, and informed the two Frenchmen that it was he who had ordered the commander of the brig to stop the *Archibald Grazie*. He had received formal instructions from Washing-

ton to let no armed vessel leave San Francisco for a foreign country—"and above all for Mexico!"

Dillon pointed out that the *Archibald Grazie* was bound on a peaceful mission, while Gaston showed him the papers given him at the Mexican capital. At length, Kirn consented to put the matter in the hands of the United States Government and the next day despatched a courier to Washington. The journey to the capital took two months. Thus, in four months, at the earliest, the *Archibald Grazie* could leave—if Washington consented.

Gaston's fury on learning this may well be imagined. He was in danger of losing all self-control and committing some foolhardy action. At last, Dillon took under his diplomatic responsibility any consequences that might result from the departure of the *Archibald Grazie*. Kirn duly recorded the declaration, and sent orders to the captain of the American brig to allow Gaston and his possessions to pass without let or hindrance.

Ten days later the *Archibald Grazie* reached Guaymas.

PART TWO

CHAPTER VI

MARIA ANTONIA

GUAYMAS in 1852 was a miserable little hole in the ground.

The mountains that surrounded the town were of a sinister russet hue; their jagged, menacing summits looked like ruins. On the bare slopes of the hills grew a few cacti and stunted palms. During the winter the south winds coming from the ocean brought a certain coolness, but from April to October the northwest winds carried with them a suffocating heat, and made the air dense with burning dust from the great Colorado deserts. When the simoon lasted several days Guaymas took on the appearance of a city of the dead. At all times, in fact, the town had a sad and

forlorn look, due to the long stretches of blank walls, broken by few openings, and the lack of commercial activity. The doors of the houses and the window shutters, which were closed throughout the day on account of the heat, were fully opened only in the evening or in the morning before dawn, the hours during which the town showed its only signs of activity.

The sound of horses' hoofs or the jingle of the little iron plates that adorned the spurs of the cavaliers was rarely heard in the quiet streets; rarer still was the rumbling of carriage or cart. Pedestrians wandered close to the walls, like souls in torment, seeking the shade. At rare intervals the *mulada* of an *arriero* would arrive in a cloud of dust to take a load destined for the markets of Hermosillo, Ures or Arispe. From time to time a *cargador*, or Indian porter, would pass by. Half-naked, bent beneath his burden, which was held in place by a wide strap around his forehead, he would trot nimbly along with a stick in one hand and his hat in the other. In a basket balanced on her head a *frutera* would

display for sale bananas, tunas, *pitahayas* and delicious watermelons. The *lavanderas*, cigarette between lips, carried at the end of a stick customers' petticoats, rigid with starch; their own apparel consisted of a short Indian skirt over a chemise. A cotton scarf of vivid colors protected their shoulders, arms, head and sometimes part of the face from the glaring sun; their black hair hung in braids to their bare feet.

The *aguador* was one of the most curious types of Mexicans. Like the *cargadores* and nearly all the workers of Guaymas, he was a Yaqui Indian. He was scantily clothed in a shirt, which he wore with the sleeves rolled up and collar open, and ample trousers tucked up to the knees. His feet were naked. A colored handkerchief enveloped his abundant, long, stiff hair and made his head look disproportionately large; a common high-crowned straw hat with a wide, flat brim shaded his face. His donkey was a small, bare, mangy animal with lowered head and hanging ears. The water which it carried was contained in two square leather bottles hanging one on each

side; the untanned leather, continually moist, took on a bluish-green tint; openings edged with wood and badly closed with a plug served as a means of filling and emptying the bottles. The liquid that came from them was warm and cloudy, and was left standing in jugs of porous earth to cool and settle. When his bottles were empty, the *aguador* would take a cigarette from behind his ear or the crown of his hat, light it and mount his donkey, facing the tail, which he used as a whip. Thus indolently installed, he was carried to the *noria*, a sort of draw-well, which, incidentally, usually dried up in summer.

The streets of the town were irregular, a few of them having a sort of rough sidewalk. In the principal thoroughfare, Hermosillo Street, were the Mexican barracks, the only hotel of the town—called the Fonda de Sonora—and, farther on, the *calabozo*, or prison. The second street, running from the Plaza Mayor in the opposite direction, passed before the custom-house, where the French company was to be quartered, and terminated in the cemetery. In the third street, leading

to a hillock surmounted by three crosses which overlooked the town, were the quarters of the Mexican officers and a restaurant kept by a Frenchman named Bousquet. The houses were all of a single story and whitewashed; the openings giving on the streets were provided with a strong grating jutting out like a sort of cage; there were no window panes, but large shutters, in which small openings were cut, allowing a soft light to filter through, and at the same time excluding the heat. From the center of the town stretched a considerable number of wretched mud or adobe structures, set among gardens.

The dock was a make-shift affair. Clumsily built of piles and stones, it was accessible only to small boats, which anchored at the little jetty that stretched out a few yards into the roadstead. On the north side of the square, facing the harbor, was the house of Calvo, the French Consular Agent. To the west was a little abandoned fort, falling into ruin. Along the quay the market was held. There the Indians sold fruit, flowers and fish, brought in their long canoes. In the evening it became



Guaymas in 1852

the lover's promenade. The women of the town, or at least those of more or less easy virtue, went to meet their gallants there, with their faces hidden in the folds of their rebozos.

There was a curé at Guaymas, but no church. A disorderly room in a tumble-down building was used for the services. The population numbered only about fifteen hundred souls; of these approximately a third were Yaqui Indians, who were the workers—carpenters, masons, shoemakers, blacksmiths, boatmen, porters and servants. The Yaquis were quite skilful and industrious, but emigrated annually to their villages, and, fearing trouble with the Creole population, they left Guaymas in a body.

The garrison was composed of about two hundred men under the command of Colonel Campuzano, a fat half-breed about forty years old, of deceitful appearance and more than doubtful reputation. The feature of the uniform of the Mexican and Indian soldiers was a short-tailed white linen jacket. The men for the most part were without shirts, wore little black leather shakos and went

either barefoot or in sandals. Shoes were permitted only above the rank of non-commissioned officer. Rifle and bayonet were their only arms: a belt, much too loose, held the bayonet sheath and an enormous cartridge case which hung below the tails of the jacket. In the barracks there were no camp beds, tables, benches or furniture of any sort or description; a large nail driven into the wall served as a hanging place for the cartridge cases. The men slept on the floor, wrapped in filthy blankets, which made up their entire baggage.

The dress of the officers was more varied: a short-tailed regimental jacket of green cloth trimmed with black braid, without epaulets, and trousers according to choice. For head-dress some wore large round, laced caps, or shakos about the size of the large French képi; others favored the wide-brimmed Mexican hat of hard felt in white, gray or red. On the whole staff there were not two sabers alike. Some of the superior officers were in civilian clothes.

The officers and inhabitants of Guaymas

warmly welcomed the French company. The new arrivals provided an attraction that stirred the Mexicans from their boredom and promised good business for the tradespeople of the town. By way of showing the joy of the place the rusty old cannon of the fort thundered with all their might.

The French soldiers, set free in a friendly city, gave themselves up to the delights of their new existence.

“What a lot of charming episodes there would be to tell of this first stay in Guaymas!” Gaston wrote. “I leave you to imagine the escapades of my Gallic lascars among the Mexican women. During the first few days there was a little of everything—windows climbed into, indignant husbands, a few duels and a good deal of racket. Some of my ragamuffins in a single day spent very gallantly a couple of hundred dollars. I maintained, however, strict discipline. One of the men, after having had a drink, refused to pay and declared: ‘We are masters here, and we won’t pay.’ I had him cashiered and sent away humiliated.”

Gaston lived with a French tradesman from New Orleans named Pennetrat, and held himself aloof from these gallant adventures which were not to his taste.

Some of the local aristocratic families invited him to their homes. Their houses, which were all much alike, were square structures of adobe or plaster enclosing a large court, surrounded by porticos, and sometimes a garden. The windows of the rooms opened on to the patio. The drawing-rooms were large and white-walled, plainly furnished with a few chairs, armchairs and painted chests ranged along the walls; on the tables were silver candlesticks, bunches of artificial flowers, a prayer-book and a little brazier full of live coals for lighting cigarettes; the walls were decorated with chromos of religious subjects and a guitar.

These families were miserably poor, but very proud, and hid their distress from the public eye. The women never went out: too poor to afford a carriage, they refused to go about on foot. The curé, Dom Vicente, would call on them and hold mass in their drawing-

rooms. Their meals consisted entirely of corn served in different fashions and of fruit. They had retained the fine manners of the Spanish nobility, were good-natured and used the graceful gesture of the left hand in speaking peculiar to the Mexicans.

Gaston became especially friendly with the Marquis and Marquise de Monteverde. The Marquise, who was about fifty years old, was remarkably graceful. She looked like the portraits of the ladies of Louis XV's court. The Marquis, over seventy, strummed the guitar, simpering and narrating his conquests the while. All day long he played whist with his wife, stopping from time to time to wrangle. Into their otherwise somber home Gaston brought animation and the hope of a new order of things.

One evening they announced that they wanted to present to him their niece, the daughter of the administrator of Altar. She was going to spend several days with them at Guaymas to "familiarize herself with the manners of town-life." Gaston smiled; he would not have done so had he known that Altar was

a miserable pueblo terrorized by the Apaches, in the midst of the Bloody Ground.

Next evening at nine o'clock he called on the Marquis to take chocolate and tortillas. In the shadow of the drawing-room sat a young woman who rose as he entered. The Marquise came in at the same moment and presented her niece, Maria Antonia de T——.

The girl was dressed in the Paris fashion and wore a muslin bodice and flounced skirt; she had fine flashing eyes and a mocking little smile, and her long blonde tresses fell in braids to her knees.

The fourth person present was the curé of Guaymas, Dom Vicente, who was very different from the ordinary Mexican priest, so often shamefully ignorant and unprincipled. Dom Vicente was of pure Spanish descent, well educated and refined.

During dinner politics were discussed at length. Maria Antonia had a spirit like Charlotte Corday's. Living in a district terrorized by the Apaches, she was shocked by the apathy of the Mexican Government that abandoned Sonora to the savage hordes; she hated and

despised the Mexican officers, whom she called "toy soldiers."

Gaston seemed to her to have been sent from the heavens, like the archangel Gabriel, to save her country. Nor did he seek to undeceive her.

Dom Vicente and the Marquis grew rather alarmed at the girl's patriotic ardor; her aunt, however, encouraged her.

It is difficult to know at what moment Gaston and Maria Antonia stopped talking of politics and began talking of love, but it is certain that after dinner that night Gaston was wildly infatuated with the Mexican girl. He was then thirty-five years old and from his adolescence he had loved and been loved many times. Never before, however, had he been so completely and so quickly swept off his feet. Everything combined to stir him: the romantic circumstances and the southern beauty's charms.

At Guaymas he spent several days of enchantment. In the evening he would call on the Marquis and take a cup of chocolate and tortillas; during the day he met Maria Antonia

at her nurse's, a little rancho in the pueblo of San Jacinto near Guaymas.

But before long the sky grew overcast. In the French battalion things were not going well. The relations with the people of Guaymas were strained. Husbands were tired of being deceived and tradespeople of being imposed upon. The heat had become intolerable and the men suffered from a skin eruption which was not the best thing to keep them in a good humor. They began to ask how long they were to be left to stagnate at Guaymas, far from the El Dorado of which they had dreamed. Rumors were whispered about reproaching Gaston for holding himself aloof from his men and appearing indifferent to their welfare. It was further reported that he received secretly two curious individuals—an American named Young and a Mexican known as Alamedes—of very doubtful reputation. Both men already had been sentenced for robbery and now lived by their wits. Why, it was asked, did he see them, and what did they want of him?

Mexican agents fanned the agitation, and Gaston, rudely awakened from his dream of love, became aware of what was going on.

To put an end to the situation, he decided that the company must leave Guaymas and thereupon asked the Governor of the town, General Llanes, for his passports. The General, who was an amiable man, surprised him, however, by showing a good deal of reticence in the matter, and alleged that he had not yet received his instructions from General Blanco, Governor of the province, but that he expected them at any moment. And so it went on for several days.

At the end of a week of waiting and complaining, Gaston felt his confidence in the authorities weaken and began to be alarmed. It was Maria Antonia, informed by one of her cousins attached to General Llanes' staff, who gave him the solution to the riddle. A rival company formed at Mexico City, asserting that it had received official sanction before the *Restauradora*, claimed the Arizona mines. At the head of the company were the banker, Forbes, and Baron, the English Consul. The

Forbes-Baron company had bribed General Blanco, who, incidentally, was a former hatter and a trickster of the first water. It is said that General Arista's support also had been won by similar means.

The scheme of the Forbes-Baron concern was to delay the departure of Gaston and his men as long as possible; by keeping the French company at Guaymas its rivals hoped to stir up public feeling against it and eventually get it disbanded. To obtain this result, they relied on sickness, the troublesome climate and a number of diseased women brought by them from Mexico City. In the meantime, secret agents spread all sorts of rumors against Gaston, accusing him of being on the point of abandoning his men, of having given up the plan of going to the mines and of wanting to stay in Guaymas where he had found his happiness.

The only way out of this new difficulty was to forestall the Forbes-Baron company by leaving Guaymas at the earliest possible moment and taking possession of the mines before the rival organization could do so.

But the supply base for the French battalion which the Mexican authorities had undertaken to establish at Sarie, at the foot of the San Miguel Mountains, was not yet adequately equipped. Gaston decided to look things over himself and set out for Sarie. There he learned that nothing had been done and went to Arispe to complain to Colonel Jimenez, General Blanco's chief-of-staff. Jimenez succeeded in pacifying him with fine words and promised him the Governor's entire cooperation.

At Sarie Gaston was quite near the settlement of Cocóspera, where Pindray's adventurous career had come to an untimely end, and he could not resist making a pilgrimage to the outpost. At Cocóspera the remainder of Pindray's company was still commanded by De la Chapelle, brother of the director of the *Messenger de San-Francisco*, an intimate friend of Gaston.

He found the colony in complete disorder, reduced to a score of discouraged men. The more energetic and adventurous had long since left for Tucson, where all the desperadoes of

the region met, leaving behind them only the weak and the sick. Faithful to Cochise's pledge, the Apaches no longer attacked the settlement, but in the countryside the animosity toward the "foreigners" was so great that it was impossible for them to obtain provisions. The men, badly fed, dispirited, wanted nothing more than to get back to San Francisco. And, as they had no money to make the journey by sea, De la Chapelle thought of taking them back by the Santa Fé trail which crossed the San Nunez Mountains and the Colorado River.

Gaston easily convinced them of the folly of the project, in view of the tired and discouraged state of the men, who would have had to risk death from thirst or massacre in the country where the wild tribes roamed. He proposed to De la Chapelle to embody the men of Cocóspera in his own battalion, and they gladly accepted the offer.

Before leaving Cocóspera Gaston went to visit Pindray's grave and found it torn up by the wolves and hyenas, which had pulled the stones away and devoured the body.

At Saric a message from Pennetrat, the French tradesman at Guaymas, awaited him, advising him to return as soon as possible, since the battalion, worked upon by Mexican agents, was in open revolt. Gaston, pushing forward without a halt, traveled over forty miles in less than a day.

“When I arrived at Guaymas,” Gaston wrote, “I found officers and soldiers intermingled. They were speechifying, demanding elections and had drawn up a manifesto of four large pages that a deputy was to present to me. Unluckily for me, there were a barrister and a former attorney among my volunteers. As soon as I arrived, I had the company called together and began in this fashion:

“ ‘Monsieur D——, step out of the ranks! You have said that Arizona was a lie. Here are the deeds to the property. You have said we were not going to the mines. You have slandered me. You have lied. You have wilfully misled your comrades. As chief of the expedition, I dismiss you from a company of which you are not worthy. As a man I demand a formal apology or else satisfaction by arms.’ ”

When the ringleaders had been sent away, the battalion for some time after was more united and better disciplined than before the outbreak, but the Mexican population, stirred up by agitators paid by the Forbes concern, became in certain quarters decidedly hostile. Disputes which had evidently been provoked deliberately were of daily occurrence, and it became imperative for the battalion to leave Guaymas at any cost.

On September second Gaston gave the order for departure. The company, in the course of its march, stopped at Saric several days.

“For two weeks,” Gaston wrote, “we have been camping among the ruins of a former mission. The arches of the church now lie upon the ground; spacious buildings threaten to collapse; swift rivulets bathe the soil with their cool waters. Deer come to drink in the tiny blue lakes, on the banks of which grow plane-trees and poplars as along the rivers in France. In a few hours booths made of branches and huts of all sorts are erected. In front of my tent the men have constructed a

shelter of poplar branches under which there is room for at least twenty people. Beneath the foliage the breeze and the cool waters make a paradise. . . .

“The men are getting ready to start again. They are mending all sorts of rubbish; sandals are being made to replace worn-out shoes. We mounted our two cannon by forging nails; men from our ranks, for the time being, become blacksmiths, saddlers and founders. Once again France has shown herself admirable in her fight against the desert and a thousand unforeseen difficulties.”

The famous festivals of the Magdalena pueblo, a few miles from Saric, brought together several thousand people from all points of Sonora.

They were religious holidays, and the fair that was held then was the most important of Mexico. At these gatherings considerable business was transacted. The dealers exposed for sale sheets from Queretaro, Tepic serapes, the *mantas* of the Saltillo, *jaranos* from Guadalajara, San Pedro pottery, Tequila men-

cal, jewelry from Mexico City, ceramics of Tocalon, soap from Calaya and a host of other articles. The goods were displayed in shops and stands garlanded with flowers, ranged behind a screen of foliage. During the festivity, the fair-ground presented a complete panorama of Mexican life. The *leperos* and the *pordioseros* went about begging, the *ladrones* stole; *evangelistas*, a pen behind one ear and a cigarette behind the other, sold their services as writers of love-letters and other correspondence. Here the *aguadores* carried water in two leather bottles, one of which hung in front of them, the other in back. The water in the bottle carried before them was free, and people drank by kneeling before the *aguador* and putting their mouths to the tap; the other water cost a *quartillo* a glass. The Indian girls, who went about clad in low-cut chemises and frocks, with bare feet and legs and long braids hanging about their shoulders, ogled the soldiers. There were lotteries, cock-fighting, booths of branches and foliage in which the tango was danced, and open-air kitchens smelling of rancid oil. Monks jogged about

on their mules, and girls knelt before them to ask their blessing.

Gaston thought the holiday provided a good opportunity to put the French company in contact with a large part of the population of the province.

He had the French camp erected at the entrance to the village and invited all the inhabitants of note to come and visit it. They went to the camp as though they were going to see strange rare animals, but Gaston, like a true Frenchman, believed in the friendship or at least the fellow-feeling of his visitors. It is in this connection that he mentions Maria Antonia for the first time:

“At the festival,” he wrote, “was a tall, beautiful girl named Dona Maria Antonia. She belongs to a prominent family; her father, who is one of the principal authorities of the district, is one of my enemies, or, at least, is indifferent. In her circle people discussed and attacked me; some one asked her: ‘Are you really in love with this buccaneer chief?’

“Then Antonia immediately got up, enveloped herself in her rebozo, and with perfect

composure replied: 'Yes, I love the man you call a buccaneer. At the present evil hour the Count is the only man willing to save Sonora from ruin; if the men of the province were not all cowards they would take up arms as he has done and shake off the yoke of Mexico. *Si, quiero el conde y lo quiero con amor.*'

"Antonia, my dear friend, is handsome, tall and blonde. Among her darker companions she looks like a rose amid black tulips. Yesterday, in full view of six thousand people, she came into the camp and inside my tent. I am not telling you this to satisfy the self-conceit of an animal of our species, but to enable you to judge what the women of Sonora are worth and whether I am wrong in thinking I have a supporter in this country."

From that moment Maria Antonia was definitely compromised and was disowned by her family. Next day she informed Gaston that soldiers disguised as beggars had crept into the fair and that they had instructions to attack the French camp during the night.

Gaston, full of indignation, wanted to dash off to Arispe and have an understanding with

General Blanco once and for all. De la Chapelle with difficulty made him understand that such an act would be madness and that he certainly would be arrested. Maria Antonia, who knew the General's character, supported De la Chapelle. In the end, Gaston sent in his place one of his officers, Fayolle, who was not received by the Governor. He succeeded only in seeing the chief of staff, Colonel Jimmenez, who, with a good deal of embarrassment, told him the orders of the capital were explicit and that Gaston's presence in Sonora with an armed force was alarming the authorities. He informed him of the conditions under which the Mexican authorities would allow the battalion to remain in the country:

“The French are enjoined to consent to denationalization and become Mexican soldiers, without pay, under the orders of General Blanco with the Comte de Raousset-Boulbon as their captain. In these circumstances they may stay in the country; if they do not accept, they must take out a permit which will allow them to move about in Sonora only. In the latter case, the company must be reduced

to fifty men with a Mexican chief in command."

Gaston was surrounded by a little group of over-zealous supporters and, perhaps, hired plotters, who led him on to believe that Sonora only waited his intervention to rise up against the Mexican Government; all that was necessary, he was told, was to take one of the towns of the province, Hermosillo, Ures or Arispe, and all the malcontents would flock to him and make up an army capable of coping with the mediocre troops of the Republic.

From what is known of Gaston's character it may be judged that he very easily fell in with the plan, the more so as Maria Antonia, with the warmth of a patriot and a lover, encouraged him in these great hopes. However, he still deliberated before taking so important a decision that might lead to disaster. If he held his own life cheap, he nevertheless felt himself responsible for the lives of his men.

General Blanco's ultimatum removed his last scruples. He called his men together and read them the General's letter. They only

replied by bursts of laughter or cries of anger; one proposed that they should fasten it to a tree and spit at it. But Gaston thought it his duty to talk to them with perfect frankness.

“My friends,” he said, “I do not want to influence any one’s decision; you are entirely free to do as you wish; but you must realize that there is no middle course. If you are ready to become Mexican soldiers, ruled by the rod, without pay and without future, you have only to say so and we will surrender. On the other hand, if you would remain worthy of the glorious name of Frenchmen, vindicate your rights, maintain your nationality, then to arms! But decide, for the time of hesitation is past. What is your answer?”

“Lead on!”

“Think again,” continued Gaston. “You are few, and isolated on foreign soil; in taking up arms against the Mexican Government you put yourselves beyond the pale of the law; for you there will be neither mercy nor pardon; you will never be able to claim protection of the laws of the country. You must either conquer or perish. What do you say?”

“Forward!”

Gaston thereupon decided to march on Hermosillo, which was the nearest and least defended of the principal towns of Sonora. The same evening he wrote to General Blanco announcing that he refused his proposition:

“As we have given not the least cause for complaint during the ninety days we have spent in Sonora, we can not be expelled from the country. Each day brings us some new act of offense, unforeseen obstacle or intolerable demand. Each day we are pushed a step nearer discouragement and retreat. I refuse to take part any longer in this comedy which is a reflection on my courage; I only ask public good sense to accord us the protection that the authorities refuse.”

This letter was apparently superfluous; diplomacy and courtesy were wasted on such rogues.

CHAPTER VII

A PYRRHIC VICTORY

THE company at this time, with the addition of the new contingent from Cocóspera, was two hundred and fifty-three strong. The infantry, under the orders of Fayolle, was divided into eight sections, each composed of from twenty to twenty-three men. The artillery, comprising two sections and two cannon of low caliber, had in all twenty-four men. The cavalry, under the command of Lenoir, numbered forty-two.

The march of a hundred and thirty miles to Hermosillo was accomplished in seven days with magnificent endurance. Most of the volunteers were barefooted; all of them sang as they went along and not a single straggler left the column. On the afternoon of October thirteenth the battalion camped at the Alamito

rancho, fifteen miles from Guaymas; at four o'clock next morning they took up the march again. After some time they came to the spot where the road to Hermosillo crossed that to Ures; the dust clearly showed traces of horses and men, and it was evident that General Blanco's forces had just passed that way. The marks left by the naked feet of the Indians, the soldier's sandals and the cannon wheels were distinctly visible. At the sight of these indications which promised an early battle the men of the French company grew elated. They did not, however, overlook the fact that the enemy were six times their strength and awaited them in an excellent position; but they marched on to the combat as to a festival. At eight in the morning they were within five miles of the town.

Hermosillo, very much like Guaymas as to population, size and structure, was surrounded by a wide and deep pit, spanned by a single bridge, the head of which was defended by an isolated house. From that structure the Mexicans could direct an effective fire against the assailants.

At ten o'clock Gaston and his men stopped at a point about a mile from the bridge. Two spokesmen for the Mexicans—Ortiz, a justice of the peace, and a French merchant named Camus—came out to meet them. Immediately upon receiving Gaston's letter, they said, General Blanco had despatched a messenger to Mexico City; he now asked a truce of forty-eight hours to enable him to receive General Arista's reply and pass it on to Gaston.

The trick was very apparent. The General evidently sought to gain time to organize a resistance. His men, numbering about twelve hundred, were without any sort of cohesion and he hoped to get them together before the combat.

This time Gaston did not let himself be victimized. Drawing out his watch he replied to the Mexican envoys:

"It is now half past ten. Tell the General that in an hour I shall be master of the town and—that's all."

Gaston, nevertheless, still had scruples and forbade his men to open fire before the enemy. A great silence followed. The French ad-

vanced, and as soon as they were within reach of the Mexican rifles a brisk fusillade broke out from the houses and the gardens surrounding them.

Then Gaston raised his saber; a volley from the artillery swept the bridge, and the infantry leaped forward and took it at the first onset. The house at the head of the bridge held out a little longer. At last the French found a ladder, and, quickly climbing it, made prisoners the defenders of the building. Among them was the officer Boronda, whom Gaston was destined to meet again two years later in the most poignant circumstances.

From the balconies of the houses the Mexicans fired point-blank, while their five cannon swept the streets; the French, however, advanced rapidly as far as the public garden, called the Alameda, where the resistance concentrated. At this point were massed six hundred Mexicans with three cannon. Gaston called his men together, put himself at their head and a quarter of an hour later the Alameda was carried by storm. The Mexicans fled, throwing down their arms as they ran,

while General Blanco and his staff went off at full gallop on the road to Ures.

The Mexican army had lost one hundred and fifty men. The French losses numbered seventy, including two officers, Fayolle and Garnier.

Fayolle was killed while climbing a garden wall. Garnier had received two bullets in the breast, and Gaston had him carried into a house in the town which belonged to the Marquise de Monteverde, Maria Antonia's aunt. Gaston stood beside the dying man. The day before, during the march, Garnier had heard Fayolle sing an Arab song:

“It is not the shot that kills; but Destiny
That strikes and makes men die.”

Garnier asked Gaston:

“Was Fayolle killed?”

“Yes,” replied Gaston, “but God be thanked, we still have you.”

The dying man touched with his finger Gaston's shirt, which had been pierced by two bullets, and murmured:

“No, it is not the shot that kills; but Destiny that strikes and makes men die.”

After the victory Gaston assembled his men and said to them: “I have promised in your name that even though you should walk on heaps of piasters and sacks of gold you would not stoop to pick them up.”

The men gave him their word and kept it. Not a single house was pillaged; the French, in rags, looked on disdainfully while the inhabitants fled, carrying with them their most treasured possessions.

Gaston sent an official bulletin of the victory to Dillon, the French Consul at San Francisco:

“Dear Sir,

“Briefly, you know the details of my mission here. General Blanco and the principal authorities of the state, tempted by the wealth of the mines which we had been granted, united to take them from us. There is no turpitude they had not committed against us under the cloak of the law. In the end, General Blanco forced on us the alternative of renouncing our nationality or leaving the

country. I replied as the circumstances demanded. On October fourteenth, after a march of one hundred and thirty miles in seven days, I arrived before Hermosillo. The town was defended by General Blanco, his regular troops, national guards and artillery, in all twelve hundred men. I attacked with two hundred. After a bloody struggle lasting an hour the place was carried by storm; the enemy broke and fled in all directions, leaving in our hands many prisoners, including six officers. Only the weariness of my men prevented me from completing their defeat.

“At the present moment I am master of Hermosillo; we have the good will of the Mexican people, and my only enemies are the men we have beaten.

“Sonora is a very fine and rich country; from now on it is open to French emigration. The obstacles that formerly existed have disappeared, but our victory must not be left profitless. The blood of our dead friends must not have been shed for nothing. The French Government is too vigorously conducted for our venture to be met by indifference.

"Shortly I will have a copy of my correspondence drawn up for you. You do not need any proof to believe in the justice of my cause, because you know me and because you know that without honor life is nothing to me.

"The important thing at the moment is to receive reinforcements. There is no shortage of men and I count on you to help them to come and join us. I shall be master of Guaymas when they arrive. All that is necessary is for the captain of some ship to bring them here and I will pay their passage.

"But the condition of things is serious. What has been done may be of great consequence to France and there should be neither negotiations, hesitation, diplomacy nor idle words. What is needed is action—and that must be energetic and swift."

Unfortunately things did not turn out exactly as Gaston had expected. Not one of the pueblos of the province rose in revolt and General Gandra, who had just been appointed governor in place of General Blanco, gave him the order to evacuate the town.

It seems that Gaston had intended to hold

Hermosillo and withstand a siege till reinforcements could be sent to his aid from California. If he had been able to keep the city in his grasp, in a very little time five or six thousand volunteers would have rallied to his colors.

Suddenly he fell sick of dysentery, it is said, but it is more probable that his illness was due to poisoning caused by the bad Mexican coffee, made of a sort of bean called "haba." One of the first effects of the sickness is to paralyze the operations of the brain.

Completely exhausted physically and mentally, Gaston, to the astonishment and consternation of all, gave the order for the retreat.

The wounded who were not well enough to go with them were left in the care of the women of Hermosillo. Gaston, in a state of agony that seemed to portend his early death, had himself carried in a litter.

The retreat was one long series of skirmishes. Fifty miles from Guaymas the battalion was hemmed in by the troops of General Blanco and was in a desperate situation. Meanwhile, warned of Gaston's plight by a

man of the French company who had escaped being surrounded with the rest of his comrades, Dillon wrote an urgent letter to Vice-Admiral Pellion, who, on the frigate *Pénélope*, was in command of the French fleet in waters around the southwestern part of America.

“If I venture to approach you in the matter,” he wrote, “the reason is that Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon and the French company with him are threatened with being made the victims of a bloody butchery, and I have a conviction that the government of the French Republic would not expect that we who are commissioned to watch over the security of French subjects and property should remain indifferent to the disastrous news from Guaymas.”

Unfortunately, Vice-Admiral Pellion was a man who adhered strictly to the letter of his instructions, and he replied:

“You put forward the suggestion that the *Pénélope* should immediately make for Guaymas in order to support by its presence the energetic efforts of our fellow countryman, Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon.

“No one sympathizes more than I do with the loyal and chivalrous character that every one recognizes in Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon. I have not the least doubt that if he had made a legitimate complaint to the representatives of our government in Mexico City, Monsieur Levasseur would have used his authority in the affair and would eventually have obtained a solution favorable to the interests represented by Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon. But you will understand as well as I do that whatever mistakes General Blanco may have made, from the moment Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon and his company attacked and defeated the General and occupied Hermosillo he forfeited the right to the support of France. No government either could or would aid and abet its subjects on foreign soil in a quarrel of such a character. The chief of a naval station must not, in any circumstances, intervene in questions involving the interests of individuals and, above all, in political quarrels.

“If our brave compatriot and his men were shut up in Guaymas, with the enemy holding

the gates of the town, and a vessel of war had only to take them on board, covering their retreat, if necessary, from the coast to the vessel, the incident would come under the category of political refugees whom we are sometimes called upon to rescue. But Monsieur de Raousset-Boulbon and his forces are surrounded at a point nearly forty miles from Guaymas. Assuming that he has been able to hold out until now and that he can hang on—which is unlikely—until the arrival of the *Pénélope* in two weeks, what influence on the resolution of the enemy general could be brought to bear by a vessel of war which could not take action or even use threats?

“And if the surrounded forces have been overcome, by what right could we attempt, without orders from the French Government, to punish the authorities of a country with which our own is on friendly relations? I sincerely hope that you will recognize the justness of these reflections.

(Signed): “*Commander of the Station of
the Western Coast of America.*
Vice-Admiral Pellion.”



The Harbor of Guaymas

As developments showed, the French company had been able to extricate itself from its position, as General Blanco had thought it useless to risk the lives of his men by blocking his enemy's retreat. An intermediary was sent to offer Gaston an armistice of forty-eight hours, and he accepted.

At this point an intriguing question arises. Why did Gaston ask for a Mexican escort to go to General Blanco's camp, where, incidentally, he was received with all the respect due to a commander-in-chief? Why, too, did he remain there without wishing to receive the delegations sent him by the French company?

This strange course can only be attributed to the debility caused by his illness.

The men of the French company, completely bewildered and discouraged, treated directly with General Blanco, who gave them the sum of ten thousand dollars to charter a boat to take them to San Francisco.

The dissolution of the *Restauradora* was accomplished.

As soon as he could be moved Gaston had himself carried to Mazatlan, where Maria

Antonia joined him. From there he wrote to Dillon:

“November 17, 1852

“My dear Monsieur Dillon,

“A cruel illness keeps me at Mazatlan. As soon as I am well enough I shall hasten to San Francisco to reply to the slanderers who will not miss the opportunity of attacking me. I know your prudence and ask you to receive all news regarding the Sonora affair with your usual caution.

“In a few words, everything failed me. I counted on the people of Sonora, but they broke their word. I counted on the French in Sonora and they betrayed me; after a signal victory the company became demoralized. The Mexicans were thoroughly cowed, but my men were afraid. General Blanco's forces were broken up, yet my men, who could at least have retreated with honor, laid down their arms like cowards. The company has made a shameful retreat, and a shameful surrender. I myself had no part in this disgraceful affair. I have had nothing to do with any treaty, and have put my signature to none.

The General did not dare to detain me because he did not obtain from me the shadow of an act of submission. I alone held out, and at the present moment I take up again the right to resist. My cause is just and I will not abandon it. If my men had been Americans instead of Frenchmen I should now be either dead or master of Sonora, and one of the richest countries in the world would be open to humanity. What I attempted I should have accomplished. For the rest, Monsieur P——, the bearer of this letter, will explain to you orally certain details that I can not write.

“Yours sincerely . . .”

Dillon replied briefly:

“If, as I do not doubt, you intend to begin again, come back here as soon as possible, and we shall see what can be done to put this matter on its feet once more.”

CHAPTER VIII

A COUNTERSTROKE

GASTON, quite recovered from his illness, made a triumphant entry into San Francisco, where Americans, English and French fought for the honor of entertaining him. The French Consulate gave an evening reception, of which he was the hero.

Along with his health he had also recovered his energy. The desire to return to Sonora filled all his thoughts and nothing could deter him from the project.

"No," he wrote, "I have not abandoned hope of getting the best of it in the struggle with ill luck that I have waged since leaving the cradle; Sisyphus rolling his eternal rock, Jacob wrestling every night with a phantom—these are images from the lives of men whose careers resemble mine. No, I have not given

up. When I found myself abandoned by my men, when I was at Death's door, I had only one thought—to win back health, strength and mental force and return to Sonora.

“The results of my work still endure. To-day even more than a year ago the country is ready for a general uprising. If I appeared in the country to-morrow with an adequate force, two weeks after my landing, the Republic of Sonora would come into existence.

“If I had at my disposal one hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand dollars, I would answer for the rest. I would proclaim the independence of Sonora and call into the country emigrants from all parts of the world. My armed forces would be composed exclusively of Frenchmen. The general organization would be entirely military, and would have to be prepared to incur the responsibilities of a military force in hostile territory. The men would be warned that they went to Sonora to fight, that there would be no fortune except at the bayonet's point, that if they were beaten they would, without a shadow of a doubt, be shot, and that they must conquer or die.”

Conditions were, indeed, becoming more and more favorable to Gaston's project. The Mexican Republic seemed about to collapse into anarchy. In the states of Guerrero, Sinaloa and Durango, people refused to pay their taxes, and bands of insurgents roamed the countryside. The public coffers were empty and soldiers went unpaid; the richer classes emigrated in a body. President Arista resigned. Dictatorship was voted and a state vessel left to fetch Santa Anna, the Napoleon of Mexico, from the magnificent estate where he had gone into exile.

He landed at Vera Cruz on April first, and his journey to Mexico City was one long ovation.

Gaston, however, sought funds for his new undertaking without success and sometimes fell into despair.

"It is now nearly a month since I returned to California. If I had been an American everything would have gone along without a hitch; I should already have found more money than I need and have been long since gone. The Americans have shown me a good

deal of regard and fellow-feeling. I am better appreciated by them than by the French, but the ideas they have formed of the French Government's designs and of its imperialistic tendencies, which exist only in their imagination, make them doubtful about intrusting to me arms which, they fear, might one day be used against themselves. However, they are making a big mistake. I have nothing in common with the French Government. My ideas are purely my own, and I am controlled by no one.

"On the other hand, by associating myself with the Americans I should lose my prestige with the people of Sonora, who detest their northern neighbors.

"I do not want to be the servant of an idea that is essentially mine, and of which I wish to remain master. I have refused proposals to join an American company and I want my undertaking to retain the character I have given it."

In this letter Gaston refers to the proposals that he had received asking him to join an armed force organized by Walker and Fré-

mont, who planned to take possession of Sonora and afterward of Mexico. In refusing to let himself be compromised he was happily inspired, for in January, Levasseur, the French Consul at Mexico City, wrote Dillon that President Santa Anna wished to see Gaston and have an interview with him.

Antonio López de Santa Anna is a very prominent figure in the history of Mexico. As a politician he was a scoundrel of the first water. Deceitful, cruel and unscrupulous, he practised extortion and, caring more for wealth than for power, was capable of any infamy in order to satisfy his love of ostentation and of pleasure. He was the richest man in Mexico and owned several magnificent estates. When popular indignation was finally aroused and he was exiled, he fled to Cartagena, in New Granada. There, in a sumptuous palace, he lived like a satrap, and organized bull-fights, cock-fights and receptions of royal splendor.

Thus occupied, he awaited the moment when Mexico, in a state of turmoil, should have need of him, which happened periodically. Despite

his base character, his virile intellect and energy gave him the advantage over his worthless successors in the presidency.

To his credit it must be said that he was a confirmed patriot. Throughout his life he had fought for his country with varying fortune but unfaltering courage. Enlisting in 1821 in the colonial army under the Spanish Government, he took part in the Iturbe Revolt. Appointed brigadier and governor of the city of Vera Cruz, he very soon began to conspire against his master to establish the Mexican Republic. In 1838, during the attack on Vera Cruz by the French fleet, he courageously defended Fort San Juan de Ulloa. In the action a ball carried away one of his legs, and from that time on people who hated him called him "the lame devil." In 1845 he was promoted to General-in-Chief of the Mexican Army in the struggle against the United States. Banished after the American victory, he went to live at Cartagena and there awaited his recall.

Notwithstanding his disability, he was a handsome man of commanding air. He would,

indeed, have been even a fascinating personality if a certain air of duplicity had not betrayed him to people who could read character.

Gaston, unfortunately, was not one of these.

In the drawing-room of the presidential palace General Santa Anna received him with outstretched hands, like an old friend whom he had not seen for a long time. Gaston might have asked himself what secret interest the General had to warrant such a display of cordiality. As a confirmed Francophobe, he certainly could not have favored French settlement in Mexico, while the pretext of the war against the Apaches was worn threadbare. Perhaps he wished only to see this Raousset-Boulbon, of whom he had been hearing so much for a year, so as to form an opinion of his capacity and if necessary make use of him as, several years later, he was to try to make use of General Bazaine, Commander of the French Army.

Whatever his object, he must very soon have discovered that he had nothing to hope for from Gaston, whose qualities and defects alike

rendered him unsuitable. He was neither to be bought nor to be used. Too honest and too lacking in diplomacy, persuaded that Santa Anna had sent for him because he needed him, Gaston arrived with the air of a conqueror, and started in to name his conditions before knowing those Santa Anna had to offer.

When Santa Anna, without binding himself in any way, told him that he wanted to make amends for the injustice shown toward him by the preceding government, Gaston replied that in any case he would not embark on any undertaking whatsoever unless he were assured a rank equivalent to military governor of Sonora.

Santa Anna asked him to come back and see him the next day. In their second interview he offered Gaston an annuity of sixty thousand dollars and twenty thousand dollars down to maintain in Sonora a French colony capable, if necessary, of waging war on the Indians. To this Gaston obstinately replied that he wanted the military governorship of Sonora or nothing.

Santa Anna waited two weeks before giving

his reply and finally offered him the rank of general in the Mexican Army.

The proposal was derisive. Gaston took it for an insult and it appears that he flew into a passion and even came to blows with Santa Anna. The General could have had him arrested and shot immediately, but he preferred to let him go, feeling certain that Gaston would soon fall into his trap.

This, indeed, was not long in happening. Carried away by anger, Gaston, instead of leaving Mexico as common sense counseled, became intimate with several generals who wanted to overthrow the Dictator and put themselves in his place. The entire machinery of the conspiracy interested him enormously. For him it was a romance of real life and Gaston was above all a novelist; only, instead of writing novels, he lived them. During the time he spent in Mexico City he lived one of the most enthralling of romances.

Maria Antonia joined him in the capital, and lived near him in the Mason de Vergara. Their love knew neither bars nor restrictions. In the daytime Gaston, realizing he was

closely watched by Santa Anna's police, would not leave his hotel; at night he would drive with Maria Antonia in and about Mexico City in one of the rickety old mule-drawn carriages that plied for hire in the Plaza Mayor.

From time to time he would go mysteriously to a house on the Calle de los Plateros to meet his confederates and prepare with them the *pronunciamiento*. These fellow conspirators, incidentally, were mostly good-for-nothing wretches or hired plotters, but they were at the same time the most agreeable rascals in the world and highly amusing in their enthusiasm, whether real or counterfeit. They had promised Gaston the government of Sonora with full powers and anything else he wanted. Unsuspecting to the last, Gaston only awaited the moment to take his place in the combat, while Maria Antonia burned candles before the altar of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the cathedral for the success of the undertaking.

In reality, President Santa Anna played with him as a cat with a mouse. When the situation seemed ripe, he had only to raise his hand to make himself master of it. One night

the house in the Calle de los Plateros was surrounded and all the conspirators were arrested as they entered.

Gaston, fortunately, had stayed at the Mason de Vergara with Maria Antonia, who was sick, and learned at midnight of the arrest of his confederates.

Flight at the earliest moment was imperative. The parting of Gaston and Maria Antonia was, as may be imagined, dramatic and painful. It is astonishing that Maria, who had no longer anything to lose, did not follow her lover. Gaston, however, did not want her to. Despite his unswerving courage, the future seemed to him enveloped in clouds. It appeared better for Maria Antonia to stay in Mexico and wait till Gaston could come to her again, marry her, and perhaps make her an empress.

He obtained a horse and left before day-break. Instead of taking the much-traveled road to San Blas, he preferred to cross the Sierra Madre Mountains and follow the old trail of the Aztecs. He did not stop at any pueblo, but slept in the woods and fed on tor-

tillas and fruit. Two days later he arrived at Acapulco and was able to leave the following day on a schooner bound for San Francisco.

The splendid romance was finished.

On reaching San Francisco this time, Gaston was rather coldly received by Dillon, who was beginning to consider his adventurous countryman a bit too compromising. "This young man is perhaps at the end of his tether," the French Consul told himself, and scarcely took the trouble to conceal his opinion.

Still another disappointment was in store for Gaston. He had hoped that Hubert Sanders, the former keeper of the "French Refuge" restaurant, who had made one of the largest fortunes in San Francisco and had promised Gaston his aid, would finance his new expedition. When Gaston arrived in the city, one of the first things he heard was that Sanders had gone bankrupt.

He was determined, however, to find the money at all cost. The doors of the big banks were closed against him by his first failure,

and he was now reduced to seeking aid from the merchants and smaller bankers.

The reception they gave him was far from cordial. Class hatred, so deeply rooted in France, had lost none of its bitterness by crossing the water. These *nouveaux riches*, whom he had sometimes offended by his unintentional haughtiness, now took pleasure in seeing him importune them and in rebuffing him.

In his furnished room at a lodging house and at the "French Refuge" restaurant Gaston drained many a cup of bitterness and anguish.

"I have allowed myself to fall into the furnace which was to have been used to cast my Vendôme column. Shall I ever see Maria Antonia again? Shall I in the end overthrow the phantom of Jacob? When I think that all my efforts will perhaps be in vain, and that I may still be no nearer to a realization of my dream after months of sleepless nights, during which I belabor my brain with that single thought, there sweeps over me a blind rage against everything and against myself. How-



Mexican Watermen

ever, there are so many elements of success; there is such a strong race of men to help Mexico in her life and death struggle, to do great things, to sweep away the oppressive government, and open that wonderfully rich country to civilization.

“A little gold is all that is needed, and am I not to succeed in obtaining it? I must, however, get used to the possibility of a final collapse of a hope that is my all in life, or else I shall be reduced to snatching a weapon of some sort and putting an end to an existence robbed of its object.

“You are astonished that I place so little reliance on the support my friends in France might give me. Alas! I believe now in egoism, in cowardice, in cupidity, in every sort of turpitude. It is now nearly four years since I formed my project. I used to turn it over in my head when we roamed about the California deserts. I have spoken of it to all sorts of people, many of them intelligent and rich. Yet only the disillusioned and the desperate have been interested. In Sonora I aroused the courage of my men by talking to

them about France. But what has France done for me? And yet France is the country most interested in my success.

“Any moment Sonora, Sinaloa, and the magnificent uplands of Durango and Chihuahua might fall a prey to the Americans. They ought to be forestalled by pouring into that part of the Pacific coastlands shiploads of emigrants who would lay the foundation of a new country.

“If this project is not realized, the United States, by its commerce, navy, population and geographical position on the two oceans, will become the world’s master. In ten years from now no one will fire a cannon in Europe without American permission. . . .

“Do not be astonished at my embracing the whole of Mexico in my project; I am urged thereto by the state of things. I am convinced that the settling of Sonora would only be the first step toward the occupation of that magnificent country in its entirety.

“It could be subdued twenty times with a quarter of the troops used in Africa since 1830. The task would not be one of subjugat-

ing warlike, nomadic peoples, attached to other habits and ideas and to the fanaticisms of another belief.

“In Mexico there are large cities, a people, a government, an army and a religion similar to our own; all that would be necessary would be to give new life to the present wretched substitutes for a government and an army. With twenty thousand men I would undertake to keep the population in a state of passive obedience.”

In thinking this, however, Gaston was greatly mistaken, as developments seven years later proved conclusively. Napoleon III sent one hundred thousand men against Mexico and they were swept out of the country.

Foreign intervention has never had any other result than that of rousing and concentrating against the intruders the national sentiment of the country they had thought to save from itself. In Mexico, above all, this sentiment is particularly strong. The Mexicans do not want any one else to meddle with their affairs, even with the intention of rendering them aid. Like Sganarelle's wife,

they like to be beaten as long as it is by a Mexican hand.

But Gaston's unfailing energy in the face of a destiny that seemed implacably set against him can only be admired.

After six months of negotiations he had just managed to get together the necessary funds for the organization of a second expedition when news arrived that the Mexican Government was about to sell Sonora to the United States. This time everything collapsed.

"In spite of the petty selfishness of the merchants, or rather the foxes, in this country, I had been able to scrape together the capital to finance an invasion of Sonora with a thousand men," he wrote.

"As soon as I was master of Guaymas, I should have found myself in possession of sufficient resources to organize an army of desperate souls ready to attempt anything against the Unknown. I had got together the arms, the ships, the supplies and the men and was all ready to set out. In another week I should have sailed the sea like Rollo, with companions who could have matched the Normans.

“And then, here comes a letter from Mexico announcing the sale of Sonora to the United States!

“My dream has faded away, and, what is more mortifying, I am certain the news is false. My money-lenders think so too, but where there is doubt, money is a sacred and delicate thing and runs no risks. These gentlemen wish to await the confirmation or the denial of the news.

“If Sonora is not sold, they promise me the funds for conquering it, but ideas change quickly. My candle and molasses merchants, grocers and bankers, rapacious imbeciles—these cowardly thieves whom God confound!—are in a daring mood to-day because they scent a bit of business that promises enormous profits. But what will they think to-morrow?

“Could any project be better calculated to appeal to men of courage and intelligence! But try to find men of intelligence and courage in that synagogue of usurers called San Francisco! These wretches wouldn't contribute a cent toward the development of a

plan that is capable of bringing affluence to thousands of men, and a new era to humanity. Not one of these millionaires in whom a noble idea might have atoned for millions shamefully acquired ever came to me and said: 'I understand your idea and think that what you are doing is noble. You need money. Well, here you are. It is not much to me, but everything to you. Go in and win!' No, those who lend me money do so only in the hope of drawing considerable profit from my blood and that of my companions. It's a bargain; they risk their money and I my neck.

"Oh, that sale! And if it should turn out to be true! I can no longer sleep. . . ."

Fortunately, the news was only a hoax, but, as Gaston had foreseen, most of his backers took the opportunity to withdraw. Once again it seemed as though the scheme was about to fall through.

The final stroke came from the Mexican Government itself.

In order to paralyze the project of Gaston, who had begun to alarm him considerably, President Santa Anna had conceived the idea

of enlisting all the French he could get in San Francisco in order to establish a military colony in Sonora. The government offered to transport them to the spot, supply them with food and give them a much higher rate of pay than that of the Mexican officers.

Santa Anna instructed Del Valle, his consul in San Francisco, to enroll the force as soon as possible so as to cut the ground from under Gaston's feet.

Gaston did not miss this unexpected stroke of luck in having his men travel at the Mexican Government's expense. He busied himself in selecting and getting together his "lascars," as he called them, and a few days later eight hundred men, commanded by Desmarais and Martincourt, were ready to embark on the *Challenge*.

The United States Government took note of the maneuver. Little it mattered to the Americans what the Mexicans did, but they feared a new expedition of Gaston's, a new victory of Hermosillo and, this time, the conquest of Sonora.

Kirn, the United States Consul, imposed a

peremptory veto on the departure of the *Challenge*. Dillon, who was also implicated in the affair, was summoned to appear as witness before the United States Court. When he refused, Sheriff Richardson went to the Consulate and made a pretense of arresting him. He was, however, immediately released, but the French Government protested in vain.

"Everything goes to pieces under my hands," Gaston wrote, "but I do not and will not give up! Life is nothing to me; I will give my head, if necessary, but I will carry this project through to a finish."

After a week spent in negotiations, the Americans at last consented to let the *Challenge* leave, provided four hundred of the eight hundred men remained behind. The population of San Francisco, from the top of Telegraph Hill, witnessed the departure.

"I have at length sent off nearly four hundred men on the *Challenge*. Most of them have embarked with the conviction that I shall rejoin them immediately, but I shall be closely watched by the American police. The capitalists, intimidated by this opposition, won't risk

a cent. I am alone and alone I must act. Thanks to the kindness of Monsieur Argenti, I have been able to buy a boat of ten tons and shall embark at the end of the week.

“If I escape the watch kept on my every movement, if I elude the American and Mexican cruisers, if I reach the coast of Mexico without a hitch, after having traveled the fifteen hundred miles to Guaymas, if I can get into communication with the land and if my men are still at Guaymas, I shall disembark immediately.

“If my fellows, discouraged by false reports, have broken up and gone into the interior, I shall try to get them together again. In that case, I shall have to cruise in the gulf and avoid the American men-of-war.

“If I can get two hundred men together, I shall take Guaymas and hold it until reinforcements arrive from California.

“Once master of Guaymas, I shall work under no preconceived plan but rely on what chance brings forth.

“That’s how I stand at present. You know what I could have done had I been supported.

I am convinced that I have ten chances to one in this hazardous undertaking. The Mexicans have outlawed me, and if I am taken I know I shall end like an outcast.

“Thank Messieurs X. and Y. for their cordial feeling which is precious to me in my isolation.

“Good-by *and probably for ever.*”

Two weeks later Gaston's ship, the *Belle*, weighed anchor for Guaymas. During the night it slipped out of the Golden Gate without attracting the attention of the American warships which cruised in the bay.

CHAPTER IX

THE BELLE

THE *Belle* was a little schooner of scarcely ten tons, not more than ten yards in length. It was rigged with two Doric sails, bent to the yards by movable gaffs, and a large and small jib. The deck was not enclosed by a rail, and when the boat was loaded she barely kept above the surface of the water. Such as she was, she would have to carry munitions, provisions, enough water for a voyage of at least two weeks, and one hundred and eighty carbines.

She carried ten people—Gaston, Monsieur V., his secretary-interpreter, his loyal friend Dr. Pigné-Dupuytren, and a crew of seven.

The sailors were the most original collection imaginable. Parceval, the captain, was a former officer of the French navy. The boat-

swain, an Englishman named Speaks, had been a whaler, seal-hunter and coaster; under his orders he had two American sailors, Billy and Tom.

Billy, a young sea-wolf, active, industrious and energetic, was at the helm. Tom was a tall, raw-boned fellow of twenty, who had not yet left off growing; he was a great eater, a braggart, lazy, and asleep at every odd moment. A barber by trade, he had arrived in San Francisco with a band of emigrants, and, finding no work, hung, half-starving, around the port, where he met one of Gaston's recruiting men. With Yankee audacity, he said he was a sailor and that he had been paid off from a ship two days before. He was forthwith engaged at a salary of twenty dollars a week. As soon as the *Belle* weighed anchor it became obvious that he was totally incapable, but it was then too late to put him ashore. He showed, too, a certain willingness and set to work as well as he could.

Bowen, the purser, was cashier in the Argenti Bank, which had advanced Gaston the funds to buy the *Belle*. He was about forty

years old, was in ill-health and suffered from a stiffness of the joints due to rheumatism and years of office life. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles, and his face was encircled by fair whiskers. One day Argenti had confidentially requested him to buy a ten-ton schooner, and asked him if he would like to join an adventure on the Mexican coast in company with six Frenchmen, whom he did not name. He made no attempt to conceal from him the possibility of his being treated as a pirate if he fell into the hands of the Mexicans. Bowen, who considered himself a gentleman, inquired only if among his future companions on board there would be others of his kind. When Argenti replied that there would, he immediately signed on. He then continued to work at his cashier's desk till Saturday evening, without worrying further about the matter except to ask the time of departure. He was an excellent fellow, full of good sense and good will, but unfortunately no man to endure hardships.

Albert, the ship's cook, was not lacking in originality either. He called himself simply the Comte de Courcy. He had gone to San

Francisco in search of gold but had found only disillusionment, and to keep himself from dying of hunger had taken a job as cook in an American restaurant, where they had "shown a want of respect" for him. Gaston had come across him, helped him and engaged him for the *Belle*. But Albert was not at all grateful. He was full of bitterness and talked continually of his aristocratic connections, his ancestral château and his exploits as a wolf hunter in the district of De Courcy. When he set eyes on the makeshift equipment of the boat he declared at once that it would be impossible for him to cook under such conditions. Each day there were bitter discussions. Gaston, however, who was very fond of him, only insisted that he light his stove once a day, and often, in order not to vex him, made the crew put up with sardines and cheese.

The troubles of this strange collection of beings were further increased by the difference of languages. The American sailors understood no French, and Monsieur V. had to translate Speaks' orders for the French, who did not accept them without murmurs.

Bad weather came on as soon as they left San Francisco. Although it was then May twenty-fourth it rained and hailed constantly. On the twenty-ninth the inclemency of the weather obliged them to hoist the try-sail and stop until the thirty-first. It was very cold and the mist which limited the horizon was transformed from time to time into showers of rain and hail. Notwithstanding this the men had to remain on deck, crouching around the mast, to which they clung like grim death so as not to be swept overboard.

The cabin, in which it was impossible to stand upright on account of the low ceiling, contained two bunks, set apart for Gaston and Bowen, and a large cast-iron stove. The atmosphere of the hole was an insupportable mixture of carbonic acid, cook-house smells and tobacco smoke.

In the hold it was impossible to sit; the only thing to do was to lie down on the floor. Grouped around the main-mast on beds composed of barrels, cases, trunks, sabers and rifles, the men took their meals and slept.

At length—what was of greater conse-

quence—differences sprang up in the command of the ship.

Speaks, the English boatswain, was perfectly familiar with the coast, along which he had cruised while engaged in the coasting-trade, but Parceval did not know it at all. However, proud of his rank as officer of the French navy, he pretended to scorn the boatswain's advice. Obstinate and irresolute at the same time, he opposed the boatswain on principle, and when the Englishman, exasperated, wanted to give him entire responsibility, he would disappear. Between the two Gaston had a hard time trying to keep peace. His personal friendship for Parceval urged him to take his part, but he was also aware of his indecision and obstinacy. Further, knowing nothing about the management of a boat, he could give no useful advice. In the end he kept himself as much apart from the others as possible, spending his time dreaming, writing and smoking in his cabin.

These disagreements were destined to have very troublesome results.

The first difficulty arose in a rather ludi-

crous fashion. On June first the *Belle* was all but lost in a fog, when suddenly in a momentary rift there appeared the peak of a mountain that Parceval immediately declared belonged to one of the heights of the island of Cedros. This little island was the property of a certain Monsieur Limantour, a personal friend of Gaston and Parceval, and contained, so he had told them, excellent anchorage, springs of clear water, and, in the hills, an abundance of wild goats. It seemed advisable to take advantage of the opportunity to obtain fresh supplies of water and a stock of goat meat.

After considerable difficulty in making the shore the crew disembarked in the *Belle's* boat on a narrow strand at the foot of a high, barren hill surmounted by a tableland. The men, worn out, passed the night on the sands of the beach, so much softer than the barrels on board ship. Early next morning Gaston and Dupuytren set out to explore the tableland.

There they found sun-baked rocks and a few dwarfed palms clinging in the hollows where there was a little shade, but not the least sign

of water or goats. The whole of the island was like that. During the day Gaston killed a seal and the men gathered some sea birds' eggs which proved to be rotten.

Cursing Limantour and his bragging about his precious property, they went aboard and sailed the next morning.

Shortly afterward they discovered they had taken the wrong course and landed on the wrong island!

Their second adventure was more dramatic. After having wandered aimlessly in the Gulf of California for ten days, the *Belle* sighted the island of Santa Margarita, which had been recently explored by Dupetit-Thouars and declared to be uninhabited and barren. A storm, however, compelled the *Belle* to seek shelter in a bay of the island enclosed by high cliffs. Parceval wanted to go one way and Speaks the other, and, as may be guessed, they missed the inlet. After a storm of angry and bitter words, Speaks took command and this time discovered that Parceval was right.

The *Belle* ran on to a bank of sand and turned over on her side. Luckily a wave

floated her off again, but the rudder was broken. In her damaged condition it was necessary to put the boat about and find the entrance by tacking about on a heavy sea. Speaks and Parceval kept up their argument as to the course to be taken, and divided between putting out to sea again and trying to find anchorage in the bay. The Americans took the side of Speaks, the French that of Parceval, and the two parties nearly came to blows. At last Gaston decided to intervene in the most energetic fashion. He declared himself absolute master on board and gave the order to make for the island. The Americans angrily abandoned the helm and Parceval took charge. A beach protected by a headland of rocks came within sight, but just as they were doubling the point a squall struck the boat and capsized it.

Instantly water rushed into the cabin and the *Belle* turned over on her side.

Fortunately her sails prevented her from sinking, and, like a child's boat in a basin, she floated into the little bay where the water was calmer.

The crew had time to put out the boat before the *Belle* went down two hundred yards from shore, and were able to land on a sand-bank.

Next day the ebb-tide lodged the *Belle* high and dry on a bed of rocks that had not greatly damaged her.

But before they could think of getting her off, they had to unload her cargo and repair her. Impeded by all sorts of incidents and by a broiling sun, the work took ten days to complete. The volcanic island contained no water, and soon the castaways began to suffer the agonies of thirst. Several cases of champagne only served to make them feverish and exasperated. There was a good deal of argument and the work went forward slowly. The Comte de Courcy and Tom did as little as possible; they disappeared each morning on the pretext of going to look for fresh water and were found in the evening asleep in the holes among the rocks. Speaks and the Americans consumed a huge quantity of brandy. Bowen was ill and practically useless.

Gaston, Dr. Dupuytren and Parceval, entirely unused to manual work, took up the task

of finding food. The doctor sought shell-fish and caught several larger fish; Gaston had the job of hunting animals and looking for water. He killed a few sea birds and found a spring of muddy water. Tormented by thirst, the castaways drank too much of it and as a result suffered attacks of dysentery.

The refloating operations did not advance; as a final blow a wave carried away the *Belle* and set her adrift. It was necessary to gain possession of her before she reached the open sea and haul her to a neighboring cove among the rocks where she would be better protected.

The castaways, already in an evil mood, became angry and began to brandish revolvers. Dr. Dupuytren made a timely and energetic decision and emptied the barrel of brandy on the sand in order to prevent a massacre in a fit of drunken rage.

At last, on June nineteenth, the *Belle*, refloated, newly fitted out and reloaded, was able to put to sea. Next day she was within a few miles of Guaymas.

Gaston thought it prudent not to try to land. He had received no news of the passengers of

the *Challenge* and wondered if they were still at Guaymas.

The wisest course seemed to be to send scouts ahead before embarking on the new adventure. Messieurs V. and Dupuytren were chosen.

Gaston gave them precise instructions for Desmarais, the commander of the French troops. The orders were to fortify himself in Guaymas, disarm the inhabitants, take possession of all the munitions of war and hold several notable people of the town as hostages.

The *Belle* rode at anchor in the little bay of Tetas de Cabrera, twenty-five miles—or a day's march—from Guaymas. Under ordinary circumstances Messieurs V. and Dupuytren should have been back in a couple of days.

But Gaston had not considered the difficulties of the road or the weariness of his companions.

Setting out at dawn, by sunset they were worn out, thirsty and repossessed by that feverish torpor that had attacked them on the island of Santa Margarita. Monsieur V, sud-

denly noticed smoke which indicated a human habitation: it was, indeed, a rancho, as miserable as all the other houses of Sonora. The ranchero, however, looked like a well-to-do peasant and wore a shirt of fine linen, soft leather breeches with large silver buttons, a red sash and buckskin boots.

Unshaven, long-haired, their clothes hanging in rags and their faces drawn by fever, the two Frenchmen, armed with carbines, revolvers and knives, were hardly likely to inspire confidence. They explained to the ranchero that they were deserters from an American schooner and wanted to make their way to Texas. The Mexican appeared to believe them and offered them some "pignole," a drink made of sugar and powdered cinnamon mixed with ground roasted wheat. He asked them if they had news of Gaston, who haunted the imagination of the Sonorans. An American schooner, he said, was cruising before the port of Guaymas to watch for his arrival. Messieurs V. and Dupuytren kept discreet silence. When night came they slept on mats in the dining-room. The next morning the Mexican

gave them chocolate and tortillas and refused to accept any payment.

Dupuytren could scarcely find words to express his gratitude; Monsieur V. was more reserved. A certain strangeness in their host's manner worried him. Dupuytren accused him of ingratitude.

When they drew near to Guaymas, after having crossed the rocky hills surrounding it, they noticed that they were followed by a peon who suddenly dashed past them and made for the town. A few moments later they came into sight of the first houses in the outskirts—and a picket of Mexican soldiers. As they drew alongside the soldiers, the non-commissioned officer in charge arrested them, disarmed them and ten minutes later they made their entrance into Guaymas surrounded by an armed squad.

The prison of Guaymas was nothing but a shed made of earth; its only article of furniture was a cracked pitcher. A low grated door gave on to the patio. Several Indian and half-breed *leperos*, dirty and ragged, were among the prisoners. Stretched on the ground upon

a litter of blankets, they smoked cigarettes and passed the time playing cards, scratching themselves the while. Now and again one of the soldiers would come to take a hand at monte with the prisoners. Dupuytren and Monsieur V. passed the night in this amicable society and the next day a captain came to lead them to the Governor.

General Yanès was about forty years old, very corpulent, affable and courteous. He was dressed like the bourgeois—black frock coat and duck trousers and vest. After closely questioning the Frenchmen regarding California, the United States and especially upon matters concerning Gaston, he told them they were free to rejoin their countrymen.

Dupuytren and his companion immediately went to the usual rendezvous of the French in Guaymas. This was the restaurant kept by the Frenchman Bousquet, who had been one of the heroes of Hermosillo. There Gaston's arrival was anxiously awaited. One of the men, more willing than the others, went to fetch him from Tetas de Cabrera.

The next day at sundown the *Belle* entered

the port of Guaymas. The American schooner had disappeared.

On his arrival Gaston immediately went to the apartment that Pennetrat had prepared for him on the Plaza Mayor opposite the Governor's residence. He had his hair cut, made himself look more like a civilized man and asked for an interview with General Yanès. It was instantly granted.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST CARD

THE reputation of General Yanès, however, did not leave Gaston much hope of winning him over to his side. From the first interview he was able to perceive the futility of any such attempt. He saw the General every evening but the negotiations did not advance a step. The Mexican urged him in the name of peace and of his own interest to leave the country; Gaston refused the invitation, pleading his responsibility toward his fellow-countrymen who had entrusted their future in his hands.

During the morning of July eighth, Gaston received a letter from General Yanès telling him, in words that betrayed a definite decision to cease all direct communication, that he could not receive him that evening.

It would seem that from that moment noth-

ing should have held Gaston back. General Yanès had under his orders only two hundred men of the regular army, and the national guard of Guaymas was disorganized and disarmed. It would have been necessary for him to seek reinforcements from considerable distance. Gaston, on the other hand, had three hundred men and did not lack arms.

Besides the one hundred and thirty muskets supplied by the Mexican Government and the one hundred and eighty carbines that the *Belle* had brought, there was a large number of hunting guns and revolvers. Ammunition was rather short, but sufficient for a first action which should place the supplies of the town in the hands of the battalion. Meantime, the men bought cartridges from the Mexican soldiers with odds and ends of their rations.

In these circumstances a surprise attack would have made the French masters of Guaymas.

Immediately after the victory, a messenger crossing the bay and going on horseback to San Diego would have found a steamer for San Francisco, where the news of the first suc-

cess would have aroused a band of sympathizers with Gaston's movement.

Why, then, did Gaston hesitate? For what reason did he still dally with diplomacy?

It has been said that at the back of his mind he entertained certain ideas of a very surprising character.

From the days of his colonization projects in Algeria, Gaston had been connected with the family of Orleans, and had maintained a regular correspondence with the Duc d'Aumale. When in San Francisco the Prince de Joinville had long conversations with Gaston, and Monsieur V., who was his secretary and companion during this expedition, believed that he entertained the hope of preparing in Mexico an empire for one of the members of the Orleans family, probably the Prince de Joinville.

It may be asked if Gaston, uneasy as to his responsibilities in the event of success and doubtful of his own strength, had not wished to shelter himself behind a throne. If so, he was sadly misled and played away his best chance of success.

Ten years later Napoleon III, perhaps inspired by Gaston's abortive enterprises, undertook to enthrone Maximilian of Austria in Mexico. A sudden revival of Mexican patriotic feeling swept the intruders out of the country.

Gaston committed yet another imprudence in holding himself aloof from the French battalion. He had, indeed, been received without enthusiasm by most of the men and especially the officers whom the *Challenge* had brought to Guaymas, since he was a hindrance to their existence of *far niente*.

Paid very regularly by the Mexican Government at the exorbitant rate of fifty cents a day, without being asked to render any service in return, the French did not feel any desire to fight in order to further Gaston's audacious projects.

Some of the men had already established themselves in the country, lived with Mexican women and had taken up trades. Others only awaited the chance to desert and go to live in the interior of the country.

The Mexican Government, which thence-

forth wanted only to get rid of them, had given instructions to General Yanès to facilitate these desertions.

The officers, except Martincourt, who had taken part in the Hermosillo expedition, were a nondescript lot, to say the least; the major, Desmarais, a former non-commissioned officer, was pretentious and cowardly.

Gaston's first action on his arrival should have been to get rid of the staff, form another, put himself at the head of the battalion and keep in close contact with it so as to have it thoroughly in hand at the desired moment.

Instead, he kept himself more than ever apart.

It is certain that his illness and the ordeals he had undergone since the defeat of Hermosillo had profoundly altered his character. All the faults that cast a shadow on his fine personality were exaggerated—his misanthropy, his need of solitude, his fixed ideas and his fits of passion followed by an almost complete extinction of the will.

In the battalion there were, however, several loyal fellows who were still faithful to him.

He invited them to dine with him, and discouraged them by his laxity with the battalion, his reserve and the atmosphere of mystery in which he enveloped the future.

In his history of the conquest of Cortés, Prescott says that the great Spaniard's influence on his men was the result of the complete trust they had in him, and attributes this to his democratic manners, which were a happy union of affability with familiarity. Cortés would have ill succeeded, says the historian, had he clothed himself with the usual reserve of a military commander. Sharing the same adventures as his men, he treated them as equals, and led them to think they were his friends.

Gaston entirely lacked the gift of making himself popular.

Still another cause kept him apart from his men, and perhaps dissuaded him from a step which might have awakened him all too soon from his splendid dream of love.

Maria Antonia had rejoined him at Guaymas, and his love for her occupied the first, if not the greatest place in his thoughts. She

had completely broken with her family, and lived at Altar, where she secluded herself in her room. As soon as she learned of Gaston's arrival she went to live at her nurse's at San Jacinto.

There her lover went to see her at nightfall and stayed with her till the song of the lark was heard.

One evening the curé of Guaymas, Dom Vicente Oviedo, jogging along on his mule, accompanied Gaston to San Jacinto. He carried the consecrated altar cloth. Spreading it on the table, he celebrated a very low mass and married the two lovers.

Thus Gaston and Maria Antonia played the rôles of Romeo and Juliet.

But Romeo was not the leader of a desperate enterprise, nor burdened with the responsibilities that Gaston had assumed.

At Guaymas the situation grew more and more strained and tempers became embittered.

General Yanès displayed the greatest activity. He appealed to all quarters for reinforcements, organized the national guard, set it at

manual exercises and borrowed money to pay the French battalion regularly.

But nothing in his manner betrayed any sign of hostility.

He went often to the French quarters, dressed as usual in civilian clothes, and in a fatherly way inquired after the needs of the battalion. His affable manners contrasted so strikingly with those of their officers that he was liked by all the men.

On July eleventh he announced that he would be obliged to send a body of the French volunteers to the Gila frontier. He had, he said, received alarming news of the Apaches and the moment had come for the battalion to play the rôle for which it had been organized.

The trick was very apparent. The Mexican Government sought to split up the company in order that it might be weakened when the time came for the inevitable combat. Gaston failed to take the hint.

Defensive preparations soon became manifest.

The streets were unguarded and retained their peaceful appearance, but the balconies

of the houses next to the Mexican quarters were loop-holed and banked with sacks of earth.

These menacing preparations spread terror through the town. The well-to-do families hastened to leave and carried off their valuables with them. Doors and windows were hermetically sealed and Guaymas took on the appearance of a city of the dead.

On the morning of the twelfth three men of the battalion were attacked by Mexican soldiers. The affair was followed by scattering shots and a little skirmish between the Mexicans and the French detachment which was on guard that day. The entire battalion was aroused and sprang to arms.

General Yanès and the local commander, Campuzano, hastened to intervene and promised that the aggressors should be punished. Gaston had the first company called back, after having demanded two Mexican soldiers as hostages.

Gaston made a great mistake in not pursuing the advantage he had gained. The General had only the regular soldiers, as the

reinforcements had not arrived. Had Gaston so wished, in two hours he could have been master of Guaymas.

In the evening bands of Indians came into the town. The situation became more and more critical.

Master of the road to Hermosillo and of the *norias* which supplied the town with water, the General could have cut off water and supplies whenever he thought fit. A conflict was inevitable. The important thing was to be the first to strike.

Gaston called his officers together in a council of war and drew up the plan of action. The second and third companies were to attack the front of the Mexican barracks, converging on this point from opposite ends of the Hermosillo road. The first company was to draw the attention of part of the Mexican garrison to the back of the barracks, and keep it occupied during the attack of their companions. The fourth company was to make a feint in the direction of the fort and skirt the quay, firing meanwhile to distract the attention of the defenders of the neighboring roofs. Orders were

given the battalion to advance rapidly, use the bayonet and fire as little as possible.

The *Belle* had an important part to play in the action. Parceval, who was in command, was ordered to take the two Mexican ships which were in the roadstead and to hold in readiness two small boats to serve as a refuge in case of defeat.

Here another curious incident occurred.

Notwithstanding the entreaty of most of the officers, Gaston refused to take command of the battalion. The excuse that he gave was that he did not want to wound the feelings of the commander, Desmarais.

What had he in mind?

This was not the moment to consider personal feelings. Every one knew that Gaston was the head of the expedition, and it was his duty to lead it in the engagement.

Certainly there was no question of his courage. He had already given ample proof of it and was to give still more striking proof. It may well be asked if his will did not fail him. In any case, it seems that he was afraid to accept great responsibility.

He obstinately insisted upon going into the thick of the fight, where he thought his presence most necessary.

At two o'clock in the afternoon he still hesitated to give the order for the attack and despatched a deputation to General Yanès demanding as pledges of good faith ten hostages and two cannon. As was to be expected, the General refused.

Gaston at last realized that there was nothing to gain by hesitation.

The battalion was drawn up, fully armed, in the courtyard of the barracks. The men were dressed in white linen; the officers, like Gaston, wore the costume of the Garibaldians. After a short speech, which was received with enthusiasm, Gaston raised his sword.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. The heat was at its height. By an inconceivable negligence the men had not had their midday meal or received their ration of brandy that day.

The two drummers got ready to beat the charge, but Gaston ordered them to put down their drums and take up rifles.

There was a good deal of enthusiasm at the outset, but none of the officers carried out the orders that had been given them. The combat soon took on the character of a guerrilla skirmish. It lacked the moral faith in an idea, or blind confidence in a leader.

Two officers, carried away by their courage, were killed or gravely wounded. The others retired to the rear-guard of their companies and made no attempt to lead their men. Disorder sprang up in the ranks. The soldiers of the first three companies scattered in confusion and sought the shelter of the street corners, the gardens and the houses, firing their rifles instead of making use of their bayonets.

On the Mexican side several pieces of field artillery, placed around the barracks, thundered away without respite. Two of them swept the streets.

At one moment, however, the first French company had the upper hand. Their fire had been so lively and its aim so accurate that all the gunners had fallen and the street became deserted. On the other side of a heap of bodies General Yanès, still in civilian clothes, could

be seen standing on the step before the barracks door, a cane in his hand.

But ammunition gave out. Death thinned the ranks of the French. Overwhelmed by fatigue, the men became demoralized when they found their officers had abandoned them.

The valorous efforts of Gaston, Dupuytren and some others failed to restore their confidence and energy.

The Mexicans, seeing that the French did not make use of their momentary advantage, began a vigorous offensive. Suddenly a rumor swept from group to group of the French battalion, from one end of the town to the other: Gaston with a few followers was beating a retreat, it was said, into the defiles of the rancho at the entrance to the mountains.

This was all that was needed to turn the engagement into a defeat. In vain did Gaston himself appear at several points to give the lie to the rumor. The blow was struck. The débâcle began. General Yanès immediately told off several companies to pursue the fugitives.

In the port the *Belle* crossed the roadstead

at full speed. Bullets spattered the water around her but she was not touched.

What had the crew of the *Belle* been doing? Why were the boats not waiting at the quay to receive the fugitives?

The *Belle* sailed before the wind toward the harbor mouth and disappeared behind the cliff. . . .

Only one of the sailors opposed the shameful flight and landed to share to the end the fate of his companions in arms. This honest fellow, named Matthew, was made prisoner. General Yanès gave him his life, and of all the *Belle's* crew he was the most fortunate. Sailing northward, probably in the direction of San Diego, the *Belle* was lost with all hands on the coast of the Colorado. . . .

At seven o'clock the combat was over and wild cries mingled with the shrill and discordant notes of the bugles celebrating the victory of the Mexicans.

The fugitives banded together to go to the French Vice-Consul and put themselves under the protection of the French flag.

Gaston marched confusedly in the band,

bareheaded and with eyes that burned with fever.

The Vice-Consul, Calvo, made no delay in receiving the vanquished, and soon a hundred dejected men, at the end of their strength, were stretched with their arms on the ground under the balconies of the patio.

Gaston, melancholy and silent, walked to and fro alone in a corner of the yard.

Wishing to avoid an assault, Calvo hastened to hoist the white flag and went outside to talk with General Yanès. He came back with the message that the General guaranteed the lives of all on condition that they lay down their arms and give themselves up. Some one asked if Gaston's life also was assured.

Calvo seemed to hesitate; then he raised his hand and swore that he guaranteed the life of the battalion chief.

Shortly after, Colonel Campuzano entered with several soldiers and began to disarm the company.

CHAPTER XI

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

GASTON stayed in Monsieur Calvo's bedroom at the Consulate. About eight o'clock in the evening five Mexican officers came to arrest him in the name of the Governor.

The Vice-Consul gave him up without protest. He was immediately imprisoned in secret in an apartment next to Colonel Campuzano's.

There he remained seventeen days.

His trial began on August ninth. He had taken as his advocate Captain Boronda, the young Mexican officer who had been his prisoner at Hermosillo.

Boronda argued that Gaston was in a state of legitimate defense and had only attacked to forestall an attack. But the judges did not even listen to him.

When Boronda had finished his speech, Gaston shook hands with him warmly.

“Thanks; you have defended me as I should have been defended. I am too poor to repay adequately what I owe you. Accept this and keep it in memory of me.”

Taking off his signet ring he placed it on the Captain's finger.

A quarter of an hour later the sentence was pronounced.

Gaston was condemned to be shot.

Martineau, the official interpreter of the government, flatly refused to translate the sentence, which he considered unjust. Gaston, who understood Spanish, said that a translation was unnecessary, and, bowing to his judges, went back to prison.

He had undergone the bitter experience of being betrayed by all his men who had been cited as witnesses.

“I have uttered no word,” he wrote, “which could throw the least shadow of suspicion or complicity on any one. This was not the case of the wretches for whom I have given my all. Twelve men of the battalion and four officers—



The Prison at Guaymas

Major Desmarais, the accountant and two captains—were questioned, and all tried to exonerate themselves at my expense. Bazajou alone replied decently. I forgive these ungrateful wretches.”

On August tenth Gaston was put in the *capilla*, a room at the back of which was an altar. Beside his bed was a coffin; on the walls and curtains were pinned notices bearing the inscription, “*Memento mori.*”

Here Gaston was visited by Pennetrat and Dom Vicente Oviedo, the curé of Guaymas.

Maria Antonia likewise came to see him.

She implored him to escape. The grated window of the *capilla* opened on to the port, and could be pushed out by the thrust of a shoulder. Gaston was a good swimmer. Maria Antonia had a boat in readiness to take him to the other side of the roadstead, where a horse awaited him. It is probable, too, that the Mexican authorities would have liked nothing better than to let him escape.

He refused, as much for Maria Antonia as for himself. What sort of life could he offer her after the failure of all his great projects?

His prestige was gone, and all that would remain for him would be to fall back into the misery of a precarious existence. He preferred death to so disheartening a prospect.

Maria Antonia, who had Spanish blood in her veins, was able to understand this attitude.

When she was gone, Gaston wrote several letters—in particular one to his half-brother, which summarizes all of the others:

“My dear and good brother,

“Yesterday, August ninth, I was tried by a court-martial and condemned to death. I shall be shot to-morrow or the next day.

“When I allowed myself to be taken prisoner I knew that I was sacrificing my life.

“I have been in prison for twenty-six days. I have had plenty of time to see Death approach and to think upon what Death is when it comes to a man in his thirty-sixth year, and is received with composure in the fullness of life and strength.

“Do not think that I have greatly suffered in this situation. Do not be grieved with the thought that my last days were a long and painful agony. No, brother, you would be mis-

taken. I die with the greatest composure. In my life there has been some good and some bad; I consider my punishment as atonement for the bad, and the little good that I have accomplished and especially the good that I wanted to accomplish give me peace of mind.

“I have sincerely loved the country in which I am about to die. In spite of certain fits of passion and anger natural to my temperament, I have worked only for the interests of the country, and I am sure it could only have gained had my ideas been realized. If France had given me the least support, I am convinced the result would have brought many advantages to Mexico and to the unfortunate French in California who struggle with a future void of hope.

“I have a profound belief in the immortality of the soul. I firmly believe that Death is the hour of liberation. I die in peace, and you must have no solicitude regarding the manner in which my last moments were passed.

“After a separation of several years we are destined to see each other again, for by different roads we arrive at the same goal. Our

father was a man who hardly ever threw off before us his air of severity. How is it that I see him often in dreams and always kind and smiling? How is it that I have retained for my mother, whom I never knew, veneration, affection and a continual aspiration toward her? What is there between us? Without doubt a mysterious chain which begins before the cradle and reaches beyond the tomb, and of which life is only a link. Yes, we shall meet again. Those who die should not be mourned, for they go to rejoin those they have loved and to await those they love. . . .

“The curé of Guaymas has just left me. He is a kind and intelligent man, the sort of person I need to chasten what is too leonine and untamed in me. My last hours should be nothing but calm, and thanks to the good offices of this excellent priest I see that they will not be disagreeable.

“My heart opens once more to the religious ideas of my youth and I go to Death as to a festival. Have these letters read to your children, and tell them that Uncle Gaston, who in the fullness of life, strength and reason died

with the consolations of a priest, was an intrepid man. Verily, it is not fear that takes me back to God. If I go to Him it is because I am impelled by the need of loving.

“I leave Life with few regrets. Mine has been streaked with too much unhappiness. I have a deep faith in the immortality of the soul and in a better existence the other side of the grave. You must not grieve for me. Death appears to me like an awakening. Men who die in my frame of mind are not to be pitied. . . .

“As the law allows me to dispose by testament of all my worldly goods, you will receive the following objects, which have no value except as souvenirs:

“1. A saber given me by the French battalion which I carried at Guaymas in the battle of July thirteenth.

“2. The woolen shirt I wore that day; it was pierced in the left sleeve by a bayonet and burned by a bullet. This article of clothing I have worn for years; it is the garment of the worker and the soldier.

“You can tell your children that I was more

content to wear it than to live unworthily surrounded by abundance and pleasure.

“3. An old broken carbine, which is the most precious of my possessions. It has been my bread-winner, and has given me the most poignant emotions of my life.

“The woolen shirt and this carbine are the symbols of my life and the years that have just passed. Tell your children their history and it will inspire them with courage. . . .

“Good-by, brother; the hours are passing, and my last will soon strike.”

After having written these letters, Gaston lay down and slept soundly. Next morning Calvo went to visit him. Since the day before, Major Roman, the American Consul, had been trying to persuade Calvo to join him in an appeal to the Governor to stay Gaston's execution. After some lapse of time the French Government would perhaps have consented to open negotiations on his behalf. Calvo replied that he could do nothing and that justice must take its course. After his refusal he was cynical enough to visit the condemned man.

Gaston, who was aware of Calvo's cowardice and perhaps knew of his treachery, pretended to know nothing. He handed him his letters, his will and his personal papers.

Calvo undertook on his honor to have them despatched to their addresses on condition that Gaston signed an attestation that he had nothing but praise for the representative!

That job done, the Vice-Consul was about to leave when Gaston asked him:

"How do they shoot a man here?"

"Well," stammered Calvo, "I think his eyes are bandaged and he is made to kneel."

At this, as of old at the Jesuit college in Freiburg, Gaston burst into a violent fit of anger.

"Kneeling, with bandaged eyes—never for me! You must see the Governor at once—at once, you understand?"

Calvo promised to take the matter up with the General, who readily granted the request that Gaston be shot standing and without the bandages.

On Saturday, August twelfth, at five o'clock in the morning, Colonel Campuzano entered

the *capilla* with the civil judge and the clerk of the court.

Gaston was wrapped in a deep sleep.

He awoke with a start and asked:

“Is it time to go?”

“Not yet,” replied the Colonel. “You have still an hour before you while we perform the final formalities.”

While the clerk drew up the records Gaston calmly dressed himself.

The sun had just risen and it was a magnificent morning. In the town the bugles sounded the reveille and the drums called the men to parade.

Gaston carefully completed his toilet. Then he asked for some cold meat and had just finished eating when the Reverend Dom Vicente Oviedo appeared.

“Ah, there you are!” said Gaston. “Thanks for coming, Father. You see the good Lord is spoiling me; it is magnificent weather.”

The Colonel made him a sign. Gaston passed his hands through his hair and gave a twirl to his mustache.

“Gentlemen, I am at your command.”

On the central square the garrison was drawn up in battle-array. The balconies of the houses were thronged with people.

Gaston appeared, holding his straw hat over his eyes to keep off the sun which shone full in his face. He was talking composedly with Dom Oviedo.

Suddenly a heartrending cry burst from one of the balconies; a woman was carried away in a faint.

An officer began to read aloud the death sentence, to which Gaston listened impassively. When the officer had finished, Gaston embraced Dom Oviedo and shook hands with the soldiers who composed the firing squad. Then, placing his hat on the ground, he mounted a stool placed at the foot of the post facing the sea and said to the soldiers:

“My friends, I ask you not to fire at my head; aim at the heart and try to aim true.”

He spread out his arms in order to expose his breast.

The soldiers fired, but aimed so badly that not a single bullet hit him.

Loud cries broke from the crowd on the

square. They thought he was saved. An officer ran to inform the Governor. Gaston remained motionless, indifferent.

The officer came back and announced that the Governor had ordered fire to be reopened.

This time Gaston fell with his face to the ground. A bullet had entered his heart. The fusillade set fire to his clothes and it was necessary to throw buckets of water over the body.

After the usual final verification, the body was taken up and placed in a coffin, which was laid in a hole dug outside the cemetery. Dom Oviedo said a short prayer.

Next day he had the coffin exhumed and placed in the cemetery. A veiled woman was present and she asked for the coffin to be opened. Then, kneeling beside the body, she searched the wounded breast with her fingers and withdrew a fragment of a medal.

The European press, fully occupied with the Crimean war, devoted only a few lines to Gaston's death. The event, however, made a great noise in the United States.

The San Francisco papers reproduced the

official report sent by General Yanès to the Mexican Minister of War:

“Excellency,

“On August ninth an ordinary court-martial, presided over by General Grazia, Colonel Campuzano and Lieutenant-Colonel Domingo Ramillès de Arellado, and composed of Captains Antonio Mendoza, Juan Navarro, Domingo Duffoo, Julio Gomez, Venceslao Dominguez and Isodoro Campo, examined in the manner prescribed by the regulations the charge laid against the Comte Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon. After having heard the counsel for the defense and the exculpation of the accused, and after having carried out the formalities of the law, the court found unanimously that Monsieur de Raousset should be condemned to be shot.

“I duly confirmed the sentence and, after consulting the civil judge, ordered on the tenth instant that the decision of the court be carried out on the public square at six o’clock on the morning of Saturday, the twelfth, and directed that the condemned man be placed immediately in the *capilla*.

“During the time he spent there the Count received the attention and assistance due his rank. The consolations of our holy religion were administered to him by the curé of the port, Dom Vicente Oviedo.

“On Saturday, the twelfth instant, the garrison was called to arms. A company of the men was drawn up in battle-array near the execution ground. Another body of them formed the customary square. Everything having been arranged so as to give to the event the solemnity and respect which the laws of the country demand, the condemned man was brought to the spot by a strong escort. After the formalities prescribed by the regulations had been fulfilled, the Comte de Raousset-Boulbon was executed. He met Death with great courage and repented of his faults like a Christian.

“I trust Your Excellency will inform His Most Serene Highness the President-General of the execution pronounced by the jurisdiction of the nation.

“God and Liberty!

“Jose-Maria Yanès.”

EPILOGUE

What became of Gaston's comrades, it will be asked, after the death of their chief?

A brief account of their adventures was left by Monsieur V., Gaston's secretary, who shared their ordeal:

"At nightfall we were led to the Mexican barracks between two lines of soldiers who brandished torches, the red light of which threw a wild glare on that dismal scene. Our conquerors had looted several liquor stores and were drunk. They gave cheers for the Mexican nation and for President Santa Anna, heaping insults upon us the while, and calling us 'toy soldiers,' as we had only too frequently dubbed them in the past. At the same time they searched us and conscientiously robbed those of us who had not had the presence of mind to hide arms and purses.

"Our prison was a large square building on

the seashore. While rooms were being made ready for us we stood for a moment in the patio. The Mexicans placed a long ladder against the wall and began climbing on to the balconies. This gave rise to the fear that they were going to get rid of us by shooting us from above, and in the flicker of an eyelid the men were in panic. For several minutes you could hear only smothered groans and raucous expressions of despair or rage. Our guards were taken by surprise, and, fearing a revolt, began to curb it brutally, which only raised the fears of the men to fever pitch. At last the order to get us into the prison was given, and put an end to some agonizing moments. We were packed together into a few very small rooms so that the Mexicans could keep an eye on us more easily, and I was penned up with twenty-two others in so small a space that it was impossible to stretch ourselves out to rest. Squatting in the dust, jammed one against the other, we were a prey to swarms of vermin and nearly suffocated by the heat.

“A guard stationed outside the door of our prison reeled about drunkenly and hurled

threats at us continuously, playing in his alcoholic frenzy with the lock of his musket. He had forgotten to unload it and he let the butt of the weapon down with such force that the charge went off. Immediately, several officers, escorted by a body of men, hurried on the scene, revolver in hand and swearing profusely, to make an inspection with a lantern. The prisoners thought they were going to be massacred; one of them died of shock.

“The officers and men taken in arms on the scene of the battle were held in the *calabozo*, or town jail. They were given all sorts of drudgery to do, including burying the victims of the action. For this task the Mexicans had chosen the men who were the most compromised in the affair. They were taken behind the cemetery and when ordered to dig deep holes in the ground concluded that they were preparing their own graves. In the evening they were taken back to the *calabozo*.

“Early next day they were again taken from the *calabozo*. This time, after mournful farewells to their comrades, they went out toward the cemetery fully convinced that they were

going to be shot. Their agony of mind lasted till they were led to a pile of bodies they had not noticed the day before.

“Then they understood, to their great joy, that they were only there in the capacity of sextons.

“Bowen and Tom were both in the *calabozo*. Tom had atoned for his past faults by splendid conduct under fire. Bowen remained impassive behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. One day it happened that while engaged on some job or other he was struck by a Mexican sergeant, which in the issue was a good thing for us all. Bowen complained to the American Consul who came every day to visit his two fellow-countrymen. Major Roman at once went to find the General, and, after protesting indignantly, obtained the suppression of fatigue duty for all the prisoners without exception. You can be sure that wherever an American Consul is to be found the rights of man will be protected.”

On August thirteenth the prisoners learned of Gaston's death. Perhaps they had heard the fusillade of the firing squad. Some of them

were genuinely sorry and manifested their indignation against the man who had given up their chief after having sworn to protect him. Others had only bitter words for their compatriot who had led them into the ill-fated enterprise. They trembled to share his fate.

On the nineteenth the orders of General Santa Anna, which were scarcely calculated to reassure the prisoners, were received at Guaymas:

“Antonio Lòpez de Santa Anna, Most Serene Highness,

“Bene merito de la patria, général de division, gran maëstre de la nacional y distinguida orden de Guadalupe, caballero gran cruz de la real y distinguida orden espanola de Carlos III, y Presidente de la Republica Mejicana.

“By virtue of the powers with which he has been invested by the nation, has considered it fitting to decree as follows:

“1. The members of the foreign battalion which revolted at Guaymas and entered into conflict with the national forces are spared the sentence of death, which is commuted to ten years' imprisonment.

"2. The Comte Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon, those who arrived with him, those who fulfilled the functions of chiefs and officers in the battalion and those who provoked or directed the revolt are excluded from this pardon; all these will receive the death penalty as soon as their identity has been established.

"3. The foreigners residing in the country who took up arms to join the rebels shall be treated like them.

"I therefore command that the present decree be published and put into execution.

"Given at the Government Palace,

"Mexico City, August 15, 1854.

"Signed: Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna."

Fortunately, General Yanès was a good fellow and a skilful diplomat who knew the value of temporizing. He ordered before the court-martial only Major Desmarais, who had disgusted Mexicans and French alike by his cowardice in the action of July thirteenth.

He was condemned to be shot "from before and from behind," to symbolize his betrayal of both sides.

General Yanès, however, put off his execution indefinitely.

The other officers were obliged to wait in prison for further information as to their fate, while the General delayed action as long as possible.

Meantime, he set Dano, Secretary of the French Consulate in the unaccountable absence of Levasseur, to work at Mexico City. Dano, who was a man of sterling character, was on very intimate terms with General Santa Anna, and went to spend a few days with the Dictator at his magnificent property at Tucabaya.

Step by step he obtained from him an amnesty for the French prisoners by getting the President to tear up each morning the drastic orders he had signed the previous night. Thus, little by little the Mexican's anger subsided.

The Dictator, however, had been greatly impressed with Roman history and, having a liking for the theatrical, wanted to give himself the pleasure of playing the proconsul.

He ordered that the French prisoners

should march past him and his guard at Tucabaya, without arms, bareheaded, in a supplicating attitude. Dano tried to induce him to give up this absurd idea, but the President stuck to his guns.

By his orders the prisoners were packed on the schooner *Ines* which took them as far as San Blas. General Yanès on his own initiative had a traveling allowance of twenty-five dollars given to each man.

At San Blas the French, surrounded by Mexican soldiers, began on foot the journey across Mexico, which took two months. Despite the good feeling of the people, these wretched men, some of whom were ill, had doubtless little inclination to appreciate the picturesque country through which they were passing. They knew the perfidious character of Santa Anna and asked themselves if they were not being led to their death.

At last, at Perote, two days march from Mexico City, they were informed of the amnesty.

The Minister of War, who transmitted it to them, pointed out that the Dictator "desired



Mexican Soldiers

to put them at the disposal of the French Government in order to give to the French Emperor a mark of his very special esteem.”

Without doubt the French Consul had at last received orders from the Quai d’Orsay to intervene energetically.

Most of the men did not want to return to France, where they had left only the ruins of an existence. Some wished to remain in Mexico; others went back to San Francisco or embarked for Martinique.

After Gaston’s death, Maria Antonia entered a convent and never came out.

Gaston’s body still lies in the little cemetery at Guaymas.

THE END

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTERS

While the French edition of this volume was in the press the author received, through the courtesy of the Comtesse de Raousset-Boulbon, great grandniece of Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon, the following four letters, which throw some interesting sidelights on the Count's vivid personality.

Letter to Monsieur Chauvileau

“San Francisco, April 16, 1853.

“My dear Frederick,

“Your delightful letter of January nineteenth gave me the more pleasure since many of my friends do not even reply to the letters I send them. De G., who must have received three or four, has never given me any sign of life. I expected better of him.

“The last mail carried to my brother and to E. Chauffard a collection of the *Echo du Pacifique* which contains an account of my expedition to Sonora. It is more than likely that you have seen it.

“That undertaking was the product of a year’s patient work, and would have been entirely successful had I been backed up. Unfortunately, I was alone. The reinforcements I had expected never arrived. My men, thinking I was dying, became discouraged, and, left to their own resources, finished in miserable fashion.

“The French can do great things only if they are inspired by union and leadership. As for myself, I wash my hands of their shameful capitulation. I was at the point of death when they laid down their arms.

“I have proved the proverb that no one is a prophet in his own country. It used to be thought that I am a changeable person, and that I abandon an idea as easily as I conceive it.

“Here, on the contrary, I pass for a man of determination, who is not easily discouraged

and who never gives up a project he has set his hand to till it is proved impossible. In consequence it is generally thought that I am busying myself getting together the necessary equipment to go and settle accounts with the government of Sonora for my stolen rights and the blood of my companions.

“The enterprise is beset with considerable difficulties: the jealousy and hostility of the Americans; the complete absence of protection from the French Government; the trouble of disciplining our compatriots; the lack of intelligent men capable of seconding me; the watchfulness of the English off the coast, where they have several men-of-war, but where ours never put in an appearance; the necessity of getting together considerable capital; the listlessness of Mexico; the treacherousness of its inhabitants and how many other things!

“Well, despite all that, my dear Frederick, it is possible you will be hearing something new of me two months from now.

“I shall have copies of the San Francisco newspapers sent to you *if there is reason to do so*. Notwithstanding the bitter philosophy

I acquired here two years ago as a porter, I appreciate the kind regards that you send me from my friends in Avignon.

“If I return to Sonora matters will be taken up where they were left the day after the taking of Hermosillo. If I succeed I have great plans; but I will leave it to Fame to tell you the story. Kind regards to B. and to those gentlemen.

“G. de Raousset-Boulbon.”

“May 30, 1853.

“My dear B.,

“Why haven’t I written you for three years? What was the use of telling you about an existence full of troubles—for which, indeed, I ask no compensation—or of bitter pleasures which I could not describe without fear of appearing a figure of comedy even to my best friends? Then—must I admit it?—my silence was in part due to a sort of untamed pride that asked only forgetfulness till it had regained the position from which it had fallen. You are not the only one who has complained of being seemingly forgotten. Others dear to

me have received no sign of life from me; yet I thought of them as I have of you.

“Do you not know me well enough to realize that although I suffer a great deal of mental anguish, the affections dominate everything in me and remain unchanged?

“At the present moment there is a sort of intermission in the current of my life. I find it necessary to collect myself and turn over my memories, in which you hold a large place.

“At the time I arrived in California every one lived for himself as best he could. Intelligence without capital was useless, and is of still less value at present. Three days after, my fortune consisted of a small boat, some fishing nets and my carbine; with these I gained my bread. Others, in this country where the sense of decency goes down before stern necessity, found an easy life among the women and the gambling saloons. I experienced, as you will understand, a bitter satisfaction in bearing my misery as nobly as I could. Later, when fish and deer meat became cheaper, I began to unload vessels. I made money at that job, but was driven out by com-

petition. Then I went south, to the devil, seven hundred and fifty miles, and brought back cattle through all sorts of dangers.

“During all this period, while necessity forced me to fritter away my time and my life, I was developing an idea. Two years of dogged determination had prepared the way for its realization. Only the baseness of some of the men with whom I was associated prevented success.

“I went to Sonora with an agreement which guaranteed me property in half the wonderful mines of Arizona, spread over two hundred square miles in a country where everything predicts for it a great future. I would like to have sent you with this letter a collection of the *Echo du Pacifique*, but I have only a single copy left. This paper contains a brief narrative of the underhand tricks played by the authorities of the country in an effort to dispossess me of the mines to satisfy their own greed. In the end I was forced either to withdraw shamefully or resist by force.

“My project took on a new character ; I tried

to liberate Sonora. The inhabitants wanted nothing better, but I had only two hundred men. People I thought I could count on were to have sent me reinforcements, but they did not keep their word.

“Despite betrayal and fear on the part of others, I all but succeeded. The taking of Hermosillo made me master of the country. I could have established myself at Guaymas and got in touch with California, whence men would have been sent to me, when I fell sick unto death, more desperately than the time you saved me by unceasing care.

“No one was in a position to take my place. The absolute authority I exercised over my companions and their blind confidence in me had one drawback: they would obey no one except me. Believing me mortally sick, they became discouraged and demoralized. The foul play of certain wretches did the rest and the company consented to evacuate the country for a ridiculous indemnity.

“Thus, a miserable failure put an end to an undertaking that came within an ace of giving incalculable results. . . .

"How many men have suffered misfortune through women! Some disgraceful creature detained in San Francisco one of the men on whom I had counted to bring me reinforcements.

"Adieu, my dear friend; write to me. A letter from you will always do me good.

"Raousset-Boulbon."

To Monsieur du S.

"May 30, '53.

"My dear Etienne,

"Notwithstanding time, events and the distance a man has traveled on the road of life, he is a bad fellow who can forget the friends of his youth. Yes, I would like to be with you once again, if only for an hour, to ramble round the places where we were young, care-free dreamers, full of whims and gaiety.

"It has been an eternity since I heard of you. You have traveled, and so have I. We have not written but we must have thought of each other. Although it is a man's nature to disown what is noble, beautiful and sacred, and although the heart, like the visage, be-

comes wrinkled and unlearns the language of its spring-time, I trust that memory of me may not altogether have faded from your mind. . . .

“Happy the man who can set a limit to his life, pour it into a glass and quaff it slowly at will under the same trees and the same sun, live where he was born, die where he has lived!

“As for me, I must endure my faults and suffer by my nature. My life can be recounted but not foretold. One of these days perhaps I will take up the pen that scribbles these lines and tell you of the long dream, mingled with so much reality, through which Destiny leads me. From now till then I must give my time to the great work I am prosecuting and to my pre-occupations.

“This letter is only a souvenir, a grip of the hand across space and perhaps across the barrier of Death!

“Adieu. I love all those around you. It is inconceivable how for some time now my thoughts turn back continually toward my early friends. Is that a presentiment of death? Yet I have never been more alive nor more

ready to live, if I understand what living means.

“Adieu, then, and till we meet again . . .
perhaps. Gaston de R.-B.”

“San Francisco, January 25, '54.

“My dear Damien,

“I received your letter of the twenty-second with much pleasure. Believe me, if I were not tied up here by an urgent affair, I should long ago have left to get a breath of country air and spend a few days' vacation with one of my best and most faithful friends. In two weeks my project will either be ripe for execution or I shall be forced to postpone it indefinitely. In the first case, we shall unite, let us hope, to triumph in the same bid for fortune or be engulfed in the same catastrophe; in the second event, I shall go to your place to await letters from France in connection with the great undertaking.

“Yes, I often think with pleasure of the good times we had in Sonora. Notwithstanding our miseries, those days have left us much to remember. The saddest moments in our

lives are those that leave no memory. I remember your kindness toward me, and you have forgotten my hasty temper, with which I reproach myself, and for which I am penitent; but, as you know, it is so difficult to master. It is rare when we haven't the defects of our qualities. The will to command tends nearly always toward despotism, but friends like you do not sacrifice their sentiments to a moment of bitterness.

“My enterprise progresses with much difficulty. The business men of San Francisco are the same as all the world over: mean-hearted, soulless, with minds given up to money counting, to the world of salt pork, flour and molasses. Americans and French are all the same; but the French have more reason to be interested in my undertaking, and are for that reason more culpable. These fellows will spend five hundred dollars on any unworthy object; they won't contribute fifty toward the development of a great idea.

“Despite the difficulties that beset my project at every turn I still believe it is possible to put it into execution. After having

spent years in shaping a potent idea, and dreamed of far-reaching results, you do not easily abandon it. Perhaps, thanks to the jealousy of some and the stupidity of others, I shall be held up for some time yet; but, later on, at the least expected moment, some circumstance may crop up which will sweep away all difficulties at a single stroke.

“I trust to a certain extent in the unforeseen.

“Adieu, my dear Damien. Put off for a bit your voyage to San Francisco and pray God I do not come to see you!

“Your snipes were excellent. Are there no more left?

“Very cordially yours,

“Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon.”

APPENDIX II

PROCLAMATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, AGAINST ILLEGAL EXPE-
DITIONS AGAINST MEXICO.—WASH-
INGTON, JANUARY 18, 1854.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas information has been received by me that an unlawful expedition has been fitted out in the State of California with a view to invade Mexico—a nation maintaining friendly relations with the United States—and that other expeditions are organizing within the United States for the same unlawful purpose; and whereas certain citizens and inhabitants of this country, unmindful of their obligations and duties, and of the rights of a friendly power, have participated, and are about to

participate, in these enterprises, so derogatory to our national character, and so threatening to our tranquility, and are thereby incurring the severe penalties imposed by law against such offenders.

Now, therefore, I, Franklin Pierce, President of the United States, have issued this my proclamation, warning all persons who shall connect themselves with any such enterprise or expedition that the penalties of the law denounced against such criminal conduct will be rigidly enforced; and I exhort all good citizens, as they regard our national character, as they respect our laws or the law of nations, as they value the blessings of peace and the welfare of their country, to discountenance, and by all lawful means prevent such criminal enterprises; and I call upon all officers of this Government, civil and military, to use any efforts which may be in their power to arrest for trial and punishment every such offender.

Given under my hand and the seal of the United States, at Washington, this 18th day of January, in the year of our Lord 1854, and

the 78th of the independence of the United States.

By the President:

Franklin Pierce.

W. L. Marcy, *Secretary of State*.

(pp. 1277-8, *British & Foreign State Papers*,
1854-1855, vol. 45, JX103.A3. London:
William Ridgway, 169 Piccadilly, 1865).

APPENDIX III

ANOTHER LETTER

The following letter, reproduced from *Le Comte de Raousset-Boulbon: sa Vie et ses Aventures*, by Henry de La Madelene, is interesting as it throws light on the events that led up to Gaston's final desperate struggle with the Mexican authorities. This spirited document appeared in all the Californian newspapers on March 1, 1854, and was called forth by an attack instigated by the Mexican Government, which had published some letters of his that fell into their hands. Despite his protestations in the letter here reproduced, Gaston was officially outlawed, a circumstance that put an end to his last hopes of coming to a peaceable understanding with the Mexican Government.—Translator's Note.

“San Francisco, February 28, 1854.

“The Chargé d’Affairs of France, Mexico City.

“I find in the *Universal* some letters of mine that have been intercepted, or, more probably, sold. That newspaper sees in them an act of treason, and publishes an article regarding them which is very injurious to me; yet you have not felt impelled to reply to it, although you were aware of its injustice. The French Legation at Mexico City has manifested a good deal of reserve toward me since my dealings with General Santa Anna. That attitude was no doubt in conformity with the Legation’s instructions, but it is difficult to believe that official reserve can go so far as to allow a Mexican newspaper to insult me without cause. I owe it to myself to establish the facts, and I find myself under the painful necessity of publishing the letter I have the honor of writing to you.

“The *Universal* is grossly mistaken in saying that I offered my services to General Santa Anna. You know that the contrary is the fact, and I call you as witness to that

effect. You know that Monsieur Levasseur, Minister of France at Mexico City, wrote to Monsieur Sainte-Marie, Vice-Consul at Acapulco, to Monsieur Dillon, Consul at San Francisco, and to myself. His letters were couched in the most pressing terms, urging me to come to Mexico, and he wrote at the instigation of General Santa Anna himself. I consented reluctantly; I had little hope, and said so to Monsieur Levasseur. It is not true, therefore, that I offered my services. The correspondence of which I speak is perfectly well known to you.

“The *Universal* is likewise mistaken in saying that I have made various propositions to the Mexican Government; you know that I confined myself to replying to those that were made to me. You participated day by day in what took place. Not a single proposal was made on my side, except at the express request of General Santa Anna. You know this, and I call on you as witness. A month after my arrival in Mexico City, already undeceived as to the value of these promises of the Mexican Government which result in noth-

ing, I wrote to you telling you of my decision to return to California. Immediately, the President made fresh proposals to me, and I was simple enough to believe in their good faith. A treaty was discussed and approved by the council of ministers, all of which, as far as the Mexican authorities were concerned, was make-believe and lies.

“Personal propositions were likewise made to me, but I did not care to accept them. In consenting to go to Mexico City I was not preoccupied with my own interests. Many good fellows had been, like myself, despoiled in Sonora, and I had intended to take up with General Santa Anna not only my own affairs but theirs.

“I spent four months in Mexico City, and was the whole time at the service of the Mexican Government, confining myself to listening to its proposals. Deluged with projects and words, hoping for little, I none the less decided, before taking up a hostile attitude, to bring to bear the utmost patience in order to obtain a just reparation, as important to the interests of Mexico as to those of my com-

panions. The *Universal* accuses me of thanklessness; in truth, I should like to know what reason I have for showing gratitude, and what, on the contrary, should prevent my resentment.

“Please consult your memory and you will recall our conversations: ‘Let the Mexican Government deal honorably with me and I will serve it faithfully; but if it has brought me here to play with me, I will certainly avenge the affront.’ These were the words I used in our conversations, not once but consistently. Let me recall to your mind that I frequently said to you: ‘Up to the last moment, up to the day when I take up arms against him, there will always be time for General Santa Anna to negotiate with me.’ I was so frank as to speak in the same tone to the Mexican Consul on his arrival in San Francisco. Reluctant to be forced to violence, I hoped for a solution in keeping with the interests of Mexico and those of the men who think as I do. The day General Santa Anna decides to give us access to the region that thousands of fine fellows look upon as a second country all con-

spiracy becomes superfluous. You are aware of the facts I have just mentioned. My resentment and the consequences that were to follow were no mystery for you. It is therefore difficult for me to understand that the French Legation has permitted the *Universal* to outrage in the most calumnious fashion the character of a man who went to Mexico under the protection of the French Minister. Abandoned by you, I regret that I am forced to obtain redress for the dishonoring imputations myself and to give to my letter the publicity which the accusation demands.

“In brief, the Mexican Government has refused to make amends for the iniquities and the infamous spoliation committed by its predecessor. On October twenty-seventh all my illusions regarding the good will and good faith of General Santa Anna were shattered; all contact between us was broken off. From that day, in beginning to take up arms against him, I was within my right.

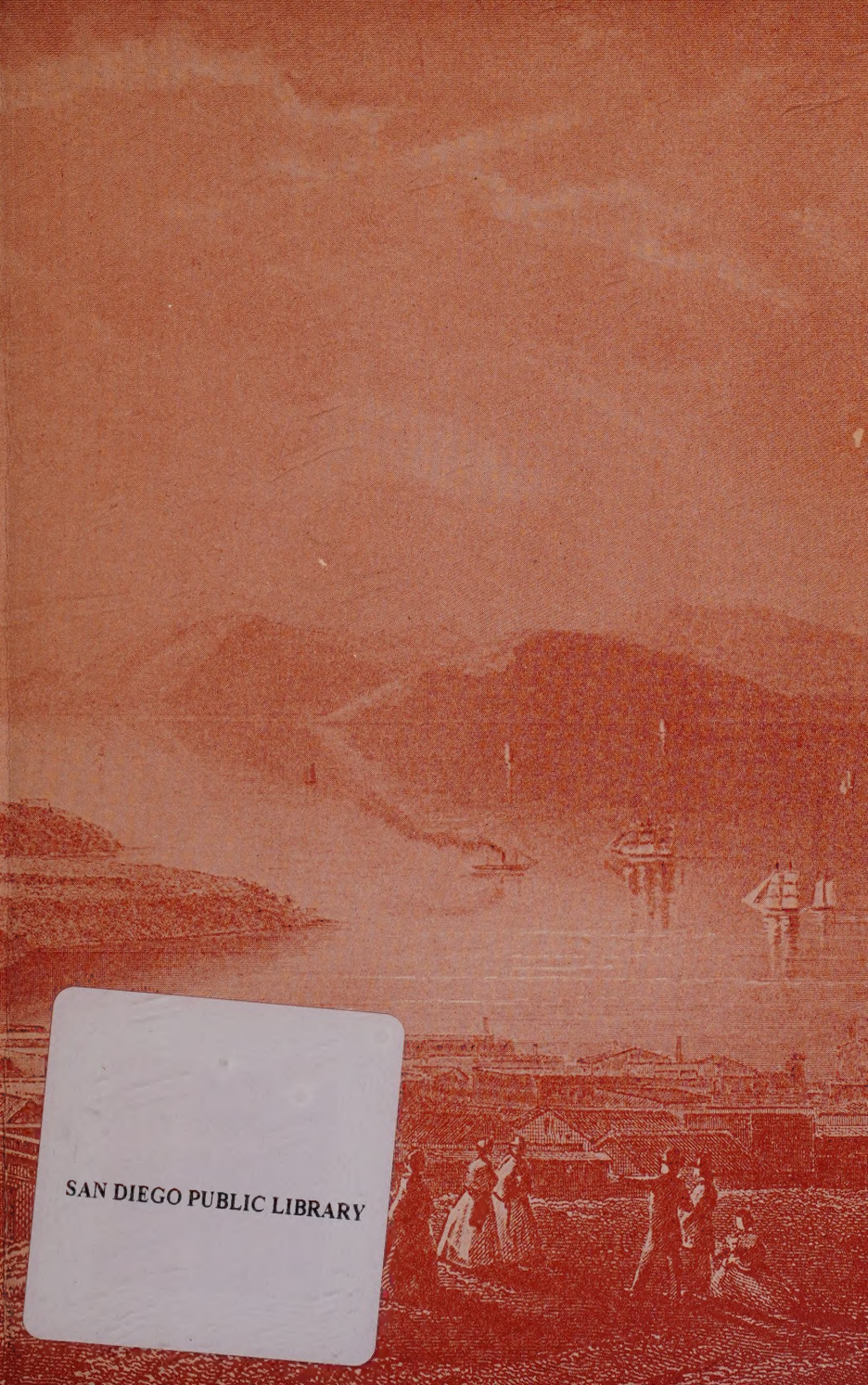
“On October twenty-seventh I was a conspirator—well and good: but a traitor! . . . I believe that without compromising your

official character you could have rebutted the insult printed by the *Universal*. In my present activity I well know that I risk my head, but honor is not to be gainsaid.

“Yes, I conspired and I glory in it! Dishonorably robbed by agents of the Mexican Government, ordered to *renounce our nationality* or leave Sonora, my companions and I find no tribunal in the world before which we can bring this injustice. The French Legation, like myself, has been deceived by General Santa Anna. But I do not happen to be one of those who submit to insult. General Santa Anna has himself put me among the number of his enemies. To conspire with them, to cooperate with them to overthrow him is my right. The fall of the Dictator is easy to predict, for is not the history of the past always that of the future? I am patient, and I know how to wait. Since my projects have been discovered, fear has accomplished with the Mexican Government what persuasion was unable to do. That government has decided to make proposals to the French in California, the true motive and object of which you can

certainly appreciate; I scarcely believe you would be guarantor for their sincerity. As regards Mexican colonization, allow me to recall to you the letter I had the honor of writing to the Minister of France on July 1, 1852. If my personal projects are causing any anxiety in the French chancelleries, the situation of the French in Mexico merits also some consideration."





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